Louis Etienne Theophil Gautier

My Duty and My Legacy

An Officer and a Gentleman Reflects on War, Peace and Honour

Books by
Christa Yvonne Madeleine Gautier Dunn

Chronicle of the Bachmann Family
published 2016 by Coastal Villages Press

My Lieder Family
Lives and Adventures across Four Continents
published 2019 by Coastal Villages Press

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Edited with foreword by his granddaughter
Christa Yvonne Madeleine Gautier Dunn
Montreal / Quebec / Canada

Coastal Village Press
Beaufort / South Carolina / USA
2025

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Translated from the original German
into English by Kennedy-Unglaub Translations
Lunenburg / Nova Scotia / Canada

Published by Coastal Villages Press
Beaufort / South Carolina / USA

Printed in the United States of America

Dedication

by Christa Yvonne Madeleine Gautier Dunn

To my grandfather
Theophil Gautier
whom I never knew

And to my father
Werner Gautier
whom I wish I had known better

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Theophil Gautier at his typewriter writing his memoir, Frankfurt, West Germany, about 1950, with portraits of his ancestors above his head.

Foreword

by Christa Yvonne Madeleine Gautier Dunn

My grandfather, Louis Etienne Theophil Gautier, who was always known as Theophil, began writing his memoir when he was approaching 70, a few years after the end of the Second World War. At that time, Germany, the country to which he had dedicated his life, was in utter ruin and his personal losses were enormous—loss of fortune, loss of two sons, loss of his home. I don't think he had any ambitions for the project other than to record his life's story for his descendants, of whom I am one—his first-born grandchild. Publication was never, as far as I know, the aim.

I have no memory of my grandfather who died still relatively young at the age of 72 on September 8, 1953, when I was 5 years old. In my very earliest years my parents and I resided in Frankfurt, West Germany,[1] where Theophil and his wife, my grandmother Elsbeth, had also found refuge after the war. But at the time of his death, my parents and I had already immigrated to Canada.

Quite likely, these memoirs were completed shortly before he passed away. His wife, my grandmother, became the custodian not only of this memoir but also of an enormous binder stuffed full of his military documents, his medals and awards, piles of photo albums and a treasure trove of family memorabilia. My father brought all of this, including several portraits of our ancestors, back to Canada following his mother's death in 1978.

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[1] C.D. I have tried to be careful—sometimes perhaps not successfully—in identifying geographical locations to use the name that was current at the relevant time being discussed. For example, Frankfurt is today in 2025 located in the nation called Germany but was in the nation called West Germany in 1953 when I was a little girl. Germany was not a unified nation until 1871 and until then was many different separate kingdoms, principalities and free states with a variety of names and rulers. After World War One it was called the Weimar Republic and after 1933 the Third Reich. Then between 1948 and 1991 there were two Germanies, one called West Germany and the other East Germany. The same goes for the various provinces, counties, regions and other parts of what we now know as Germany—their names keep changing. And some parts are today in different countries. Silesia, for example, was once part of Germany but since 1948 has been part of Poland. All of these changes have been the result of the political upheavals and wars that have been constants in the history of Germany.

In 1989 my father died suddenly; my mother followed some 16 years later. It wasn't until I was winding up my mother's estate that I came across Theophil's memoir which was crammed into a cupboard brimful of family history. As with so much of the Gautier family history, I knew virtually nothing. My ignorance was profound—all of this was new to me. My father's silence about his life and that of his family in Germany will forever mystify me. He was an unusually reserved man of few words who kept his emotions hidden from my view. I can only surmise that this was a characteristic inherited or learned from his own father; to push forward with strength and without complaint. Having left Germany for Canada, it seems he quietly shut the door to his memories and never looked back.

My father had evidently begun a translation of Theophil's memoir, perhaps some 20 pages. Although his efforts were not to a professional standard, it was clear that he regarded these memoirs as important and worth passing down to subsequent family generations.

Given that the entirety of family history now in my possession was in German, and being the only one of us left in Canada who spoke that language, the only way I could pass this rich legacy on to my sons and grandchildren, all English-speaking Canadians, was to have it translated. That was my first task. Second was tackling the history of my mother's family, which resulted in *The Chronicle of the Bachmann Family*, published in 2016. Immediately after the end of the Second World War, with so much lost, my maternal grandfather Herbert Bachmann had also sat down to resurrect what records remained of that rich family history stretching back in an unbroken line to the 1600s. The memoir he created became the foundation of that first book.

In 2019 this was followed by the story of the Lieder family, titled *My Lieder Family, Lives and Adventures across Four Continents*, of which my grandmother Elsbeth, Theophil's wife, was a member. The Lieder family stories of travels and adventures in Asia, of fortunes gained and lost, are equally as astonishing as these.

Clearly, my family has a penchant for memoirs. What shines through for me in each of these is the importance both grandfathers attach to knowing where we have come from as an explanation, to a large extent, of who we are. These histories matter to them. Both of them went to great lengths to preserve and pass on the history of our families to future generations. Not just as a matter of pride but in the belief that in understanding our ancestry, definitive core family values, traditions and beliefs can be passed on to the next generation.

Theophil Gautier's memoir is and will be my final effort to leave my sons with a legacy that they can read and hopefully appreciate. Should this not be of interest to them, it matters not to me—I will have resolved my duty to future generations. Although never my aim, it has been suggested that the story will also be of interest to

historians as a first-hand account not only of a participant in many key battles of the First World War, but also a look into the mindset of a German from the late 19th century through all the horrors of the first half of the 20th century. It is a wonderful glimpse into how an educated and worldly man of the time saw what was happening around him.

There is much peripheral history which could be delved into in greater depth, but I have been cautious about doing so. Both my grandfather and my father were fascinated by our Huguenot roots but given that the memoir is already quite long, I have chosen to eliminate most of those references. I have also chosen not to elaborate fully on the history of Germany despite the obvious fact that those times and events formed the scaffolding not only of Theophil's life but of his culture, his values and beliefs. Where context or additional information is deemed necessary, this has been achieved in the form of footnotes.[2]

My reluctance to make alterations to Theophil's voice in his memoirs—which comes across very clearly—meant that very few edits were made to the existing manuscript. Furthermore, I decided not to make changes to the text based on modern sensibilities and would implore the reader to refrain from judging by a modern standard. It is important that we understand how worldviews come to be shaped differently and evolve over time. To that end, I have not altered his portrayal of Chinese living on "flower boats" in extreme poverty which may sound offensive, yet he is only stating facts in the manner of his time. Nor have I changed or eliminated words such as "negro" or "coolie". To the modern ear, these too are offensive but since they were standard terms at the time and not deliberately used in a pejorative way, I have left them. To whitewash the past is to refrain from learning from it, for there is no better way of judging the future but by the past.

The result is a first-hand account of many pivotal historical moments of the twentieth century from a man of such stature that he was privy to decisions made in many different parts of the world. Finding a memoir by such a well-travelled and knowledgeable individual is rare, but to have one from someone personally involved in so many significant events and battles is, I believe, truly remarkable. It is a unique glimpse into the views, perceptions and values of another generation living in an entirely different era.

Not only did Theophil live through two world wars and see his world move from a peaceful and pleasant place to one of unimaginable horrors, but he grew up in a place of plenty and saw not just his country, but the world impoverished and decimated. It was a deeply

[2] C.D. Mine are identified with the prefix C.D. for Christa Dunn, the translator's with the prefix T.N. for Translator's Note.

traumatic way to live, essentially seeing the world evolve backwards, and yet he retains his belief in people's decency and his hopes for the future after everything he has seen and endured. Through harrowing hardship and losses he never complains but soldiers resolutely on.

Theophil defines himself as "a patriot, an impeccably trained naval officer, and an honour-loving soldier". His naval career culminated as a commander in chief of a torpedo boat flotilla and as representative of the Commander of the Naval Forces in the North Sea during the First World War. During the Second World War, he would become a General in the German *Wehrmacht* (Army). But it was as a teenage naval cadet that the pillars upon which he forged his life were created: duty, integrity and a soldier's code of honour which decreed doing the right thing regardless of difficulty. To Theophil this code privileged devotion and loyalty to his country and to his Emperor above all else. "For what use would a man without honour be to his family?", he asks. These ethical standards, cultural tenets and beliefs were the threads with which he wove the fabric of his life.

He began his career travelling the world as a young naval cadet, first on tall-masted ships in harrowing conditions which he vividly described. Given the current state of world affairs, comparing his depictions of life in China, Japan and Russia in the late 1800s and early 1900s to the present becomes quite fascinating. Many of his views were prescient. Considering Russia as part of the East, he declares that "The line between the Western and Eastern mentality is very definite. Bridges cannot cross it". As an ever-higher ranked officer he would travel not just by sea but by land, crossing international borders with frequency and aplomb, concluding that our world is big enough for everyone to live comfortably "if only people would be selfless enough not to begrudge their dear neighbours the butter on their bread".

In the same way that he expects his reader to be familiar with history and geography, his memoir is peppered with casual references to art and literature which he naturally expects that his family will know and understand. This enviably broad education in the humanities shows us just how uncultured we have become in comparison.

Although he considered himself first and foremost a Prussian and a German, he speaks frequently of his belief in a European entity. He was a Pan-European and in this too he was ahead of his time (foreshadowing the European Union which was not formed until 1952 by the Maastricht Treaty). He had a great love and admiration for the British, alluding knowledgeably to its naval history. Throughout his life he maintained enduring friendships between his family and many English. His four sons were brought up in the same mold, with each being sent repeatedly to European destinations. In the early 1900s he speaks of the easy friendship between the Germans

and the English which seems surprising given the war that would exist between them in just over a decade:

> *One must not say that it was hatred and embitterment that led by necessity to the wars. The peoples want peace and the ties between individuals across all borders are very strong. Wars are waged by interest groups who unleash the catastrophe of a technological war on the poor population at large for selfish reasons or out of an arrogant sense of power or because their little thrones have begun to wobble.*

Theophil had four sons—the eldest of these was my father, Werner, born two weeks before the outbreak of the First World War. As those hostilities came to a shuddering end, three other sons followed in rapid succession. Theophil, having been orphaned at 11 years, found great joy, pride and comfort in his family, referring to his boys as "my honour guard". Of these, the second son would die in the North Sea during the early years of the Second World War. It is excruciatingly heart-wrenching to read how he consoles himself that his son's death was an honourable one. Even in this dark hour, his "leitmotif" of honour, duty and loyalty to his country never wavered —though perhaps it might have wobbled.

During the entirety of the First World War, as a Captain and Commander of a torpedo boat flotilla, he navigated through the North Sea in these small boats. He took part in the famous Battle of Jutland, (known as Skagerrak in German), that murderous clash between the English and German fleets in which both sides claimed victory. His first-hand account of that battle is riveting, and not just to those interested in military tactics.

On November 22, 1919, with the war lost, he resigned from his beloved navy refusing to serve under the left-wing government which emerged in Germany after its defeat. It was a decision which did not come easily. By then the Emperor had abdicated—it was to him that Theophil had sworn his oath of loyalty and allegiance. He continued to correspond with the Emperor, whom he knew on a personal basis. Included in the memoir are letters which the two men exchanged. In Theophil's view:

> *It is important that we Germans remember when one is tempted to lay all the blame for our defeat on the soldiers and to malign them. The fate of the individual soldier affected does not figure here, and the soldier will come to terms with that, too. But the consequences for the future, the destabilization of trust in the state will have disastrous consequence.*

Disastrous consequences did indeed follow. The Weimar Republic was an abject failure, leading inexorably to an even more violent upheaval, the Third Reich, which followed a scant fifteen years later. Here too, his firsthand descriptions of life during this time do not

stint on detail. Having cast aside his beloved and successful naval career, coping with civilian life did not come easily to him, even as the drumbeat of another war grew ever louder and more persistent.

He does not fully absolve the Allies from responsibility for another conflict, saying "Churchill butchered the wrong pig". He deems Lord Fischer's ethics ("Might makes right") to be of a lower standard than those of a German officer. To be absolutely clear: never does he absolve Germany from blame:

> [There are reasons, he says] *why we had to pay the bill now. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons to the third and fourth generation. The social revolution was approaching, and with it, the rearrangement of society. We wrested technology from the gods as Prometheus took fire. Now we are chained to the rock and every day the eagle comes to tear at our liver. Hercules, the deliverer, came, but he was not—as has been revealed—a deliverer but a corrupter of our people. It was Hitler who was coming to the fore.*

Thus in 1937 he was conscripted, this time into the *Luftwaffe* (Air Force). I foresee that readers will understandably struggle to understand why he would choose to fight for the Third Reich. He did not step lightly back into military life, certainly not without wrestling once again with his conscience and revisiting the code of honour and duty which so defined him. As George Eliot said: "We must find our duty in what comes to us, not in what we imagine might have been". Anyone can do their duty when there is no cost to it, it is easy then to walk the path of honour. Yet there came this time in his life when this was no longer easy. He was faced with the insoluble task to wage a war he did not want, in the "clear knowledge that the war decided the existence or non-existence of the beloved fatherland".[3] In short, he chose to defend his country, his home and his family.

He speaks of the time "before the evil came". Throughout his memoir he makes it abundantly clear that he hated Hitler and sympathized with those who tried to get rid of him. He did more than just sympathize. He was actively a participant in the attempt to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944. According to my father and my uncle Georg he only escaped recrimination because his faithful maid in Vienna provided him with a false alibi. In his memoir, Theophil does not overtly talk about his part in the plot, but only hints at it. Quite likely he still feared repercussions, but it is evident from his close ties to the other plotters. Stauffenberg, the leader of the attempted coup, and others were executed by firing squad. My grandfather never ceased to wrestle with his conscience, saying of his decision to overthrow that evil government, "Only he who has experienced it

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[3] C.D. This is an excerpt from "The Last Words of Jodl", a newspaper clipping found amongst my grandfather's papers, about General Alfred Jodl.

first-hand knows the inner battles that precede the decision to break the oath of allegiance".[4]

Following the annexation of Austria, Theophil transferred to Vienna, where he received a very influential position as a military armament's inspector, rising eventually to the rank of General (April 1938–April 1944). According to his son Georg's memoirs, during the war years he helped many people escape the Nazis by getting them out of the country:

> *On the day the other allied troops moved in, there was nothing but pure joy all around. We even received visits from several English ladies and gentlemen, and we continued to have lively contact with all our Austrian friends and neighbours. It is difficult to imagine more solid ties; sticking together proved its worth throughout all trials and tribulations.*

During the American occupation which followed the war, the Americans granted him a certification or pass which required any or all American agencies to help him, should this be necessary. For a German general, this is an astonishing piece of paper.

The aftermath of the war was grim beyond imagining. Two sons had died, his home and that of his wife's family estate nearby were bombed, his fortune likewise obliterated, his beloved country ravaged and destroyed. In Vienna at war's end:

> *I am writing these lines while landlocked at the heart of our continent. Outside right now, armed Russian soldiers are roving about. Shots are ringing out and women are shrieking. Yesterday they murdered a young girl in the neighbour's house. I need to concentrate. And so, with as much willpower as I can muster, I think of the sea, and now I feel its bracing salt air and see the horizon and am consumed in my longing for it. Will my wish ever come true, to once more have her carry me far away and then conclude my existence in a little house on the beach? My soul—and this is my answer—was conquered by the sea and will never be returned.*

Amongst his papers I found a clipping entitled "Jodl's last words". It is with these words that he concludes his memoir. Alfred Jodl had been chief of operations of German armed forces during the Second World War; he was executed following the Nuremberg trials. His last words must have resonated with Theophil; perhaps he even had sympathy for him. Both men were, after all, products of the same code of honour. Theophil might well have echoed these same words:

> *I believe that no person can act better than by striving for the highest possible goals, within their own circumstances. I believe*

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[4] C.D. In a separate document, also written by Theophil, he states categorically that he was actively involved in the attempt to assassinate Hitler.

that duty to the people and fatherland is above all others. May this duty be replaced in a happy future by an even higher one: a duty to humanity.

I believe that my grandfather, Theophil Gautier, was an honourable man, who despite all that he witnessed and endured, continued to believe that the fundamental goodness of humanity would prevail once more. It was not orders which he followed, but his own well-honed conscience, and to this he remained true throughout his life. Beset by circumstances beyond his control and counter to his beliefs, he steered his course with honour and dignity, forever loyal to his own clear conscience.

He left his family with few material possessions—these had all been lost. What he left us with is a much more valuable legacy of both character and faith. He was strong, resilient, wise and courageous. Even though he had been repeatedly broken into pieces, still he mustered the courage to pick the pieces up, put them back together and soldier on.

Sitting at his desk in the aftermath of the war he writes:

To write them down and ease my heart is the purpose of these notes. Part apology, part legacy. Something like a teacher who wags his finger and admonishes his students not to repeat the foolish mistakes he himself was prone to make.

From his memoir I have come to value this grandfather about whom I had previously known absolutely nothing. I have chuckled at his sense of humour, wept for his losses which are mine as well, been inspired by his honesty and strength. He was so much more than a Prussian soldier—he loved to dance and sing, loved music, loved children and wrote fairy tales for them, loved practical jokes. He was a raconteur, a man who moved effortlessly in the highest echelons of societies but had great empathy and kindness for those who worked for him. He was fiercely proud of his four sons and devoted to his family. He was cultured and erudite, a thinker and a philosopher. He was my grandfather.

Louis Etienne Theophil Gautier
My Duty and My Legacy
An Officer and a Gentleman Reflects on War, Peace and Honour

A portrait in watercolour of Theophil Gautier in his dress uniform as a Lieutenant General in the Luftwaffe by an artist whose name appears on the signed inscription to be Malesky. Dated 1943, this portrait hangs in 2025 in the Montreal house of his granddaughter, Christa Gautier Dunn.

Prologue: A Balance Sheet

"You will draw up a balance sheet for me every month," said my new boss, a heavy industrialist. I had just left my beloved navy service after the First World War and had become a bookkeeper in one of his factories in the Rhineland. But what was a balance sheet? I had no idea. So I began working backwards through old balance sheets and ultimately went to see a befriended banker who told me the basics. Soon I knew how to do it and my boss, a German-American, was satisfied. "If you hadn't been able to do it, you would have been let go."

Now that I know the ins and outs of balance sheets, I am going to attempt to draw up the balance sheet of my wonderfully colourful life and put my eyes on the bottom line. Perhaps it will be useful to someone; perhaps it will bring relief of all the debts that I have come to owe to life: the many hours that I let go unused, so much that I missed, so much frittered away. What is the remaining pay-out? I'm now approaching seventy.[5] My poor heart, which has had to work through so much joy and sorrow, is beating ever more weakly. The "*carpe diem*" that I now practice hungrily is no use against the realization that every day the treasure of hope and joy is becoming alarmingly smaller.

In any case, how did I come to have this boss who soberly urged me to draw the balance? It was a hot summer's day. After concluding the four-week summer manoeuvre with the powerful Imperial High Seas Fleet, I entered the Kiel harbour on my torpedo boat, wedged in an endless queue of vessels going the same way as I. Then the boats are moored. Everyone is looking forward to shore leave and to seeing their families. A message comes in over the radio. Some of the boats are to cast off again right away and take the Shipbuilding Technology Association on a cruise; give them a torpedo presentation. With fury in my heart, I welcomed the shipbuilders on board and sailed quickly, so I could promptly return. Our guests of course crowded the bridge and wanted to know everything about everything. I was distracted. The torpedo was fired and I followed it full speed ahead to pick it up after it landed. But a torpedo keeps going for many miles and it takes a long time before you catch up to it. And now, to my horror, I saw that we were heading straight toward a Danish

[5] C.D. Theophil is apparently writing these lines in 1950 or 1951.

steamship that had changed its course to enter the harbour and was just what our torpedo had been waiting for.

I started the siren myself, which sounded its persistent shrill howl, shone a searchlight at the bridge of the Danish ship and warned them with a flag signal. In this way, a tragedy could be averted at the last minute. My current boss was among the guests on board. For him, this production was a lot of fun. When, several years later, our country's breakdown after the First World War ejected me from my beloved navy career, he took me into his company. And this is how steering a torpedo boat resulted in my ability to draw up a balance sheet.

It is with shame that I remember here how Admiral Nelson, to take an example, did not have the opportunity to write his memoirs. How very much more valuable they would have been. If only his flagship, the *Victory*, had not come alongside the French *Redoutable*, commandeered by the brave Captain Lucas, and Nelson had not been killed with a shot to his chest by one of the many marksmen positioned on the yards of the *Redoutable*. These marksmen had a peculiar history, by the way. Napoleon assigned Tyrolese *Standschützen,* or riflemen, supposedly 4,000 of them, to his fleet. These poor devils now had to climb up into the completely unfamiliar territory of the rigging carrying their heavy carbines and shoot down from there. Living aboard a ship would have been so unpleasant to them, and they would have truly longed for their native mountains, which few of them likely ever saw again. They were the predecessors of the modern "displaced people."

What would Nelson have had to say about the moment when, off Copenhagen, he had his signal for "close action" nailed to the mast, while the flag signal "leave off action" was flying on the flagship of Sir Hyde Parker, the fleet's Commander-in-Chief and his superior. Nelson had held the scope to his blind eye and declared that he could not see a signal on the flagship.

At any rate, besides some unique characteristics that described the ever-venerable man, Nelson was apparently also a happy-go-lucky sort of fellow. And people tell the following yarn: a doctor put Nelson's dead body into a full barrel of rum to keep it from decomposing on the way home to the English port. The rum barrel was marked with the four letters G.R.O.G., Genuine Rum of Georgetown. En route, the barrel was tapped by unsuspecting sailors who had a mighty thirst following the heat of the battle. The jolly Blue Jackets had a good refreshment. When they entered the harbour and the

contents of the barrel became known, the revellers went pale and promptly offered sacrifice to Neptune. Since then, people in the navy have said mockingly, "Oh, did you have too much GROG?" when someone was ill.

I wonder what Nelson would have said if he had lived to see his opponent, the French admiral Villeneuve, commit suicide before he could be court martialed by Napoleon, who was angered about the loss at Trafalgar. Surely, he would have found that Villeneuve was innocent. Building an officer corps, especially in the navy, simply takes time and qualified recruits, and the noble French naval officer corps had essentially been "liquidated" during the years of the revolution. And so, in the final analysis, these capable admirals and decent people ultimately killed each other. They had been set on each other like fighting cocks by the world around them. Does it not seem just like a Punch-and-Judy show when the curtain falls after Punch has killed the other characters and finally himself? Is the great scholar who prophesized the downfall of the Western world truly in the right when all he can do is diagnose the terrific senselessness of all world events? Personally, I believe that Leo Tolstoy is right when he says: "People have lost God, and He will punish them for it."

With respect to Nelson's unwritten memoirs, I must say how much I regret that we were unable to help defend his mighty heritage but instead had to fight it bitterly twice. If only we could now help to preserve the edifice of the empire, which is so vital to us whites and especially to us Europeans! After all, as much as I passionately love my fatherland, intellectually I first and foremost feel myself to be European. The many borders, passports, traffic obstructions and other impediments invented by the evil spirit of hatred and envy belong in the curiosity cabinet. This seems to be an opinion held by many Europeans, and if we were to act on this insight and come together, God would be pleased and bless us. Perhaps my strong sense of being European stems from my family's roots, which are Huguenot, therefore originally French.[6]

[6] C.D. The Huguenots were a group of French Protestants who were increasingly persecuted by the Catholic royals of France until Louis XIV issued the Edict of Fontainebleau in 1685, ending their protection and causing Huguenots to convert or escape France.

Marie Magdalena Claude, Theophil's paternal great-great grandmother, on left, and her husband, Louis Gautier, "Marchand de Tabac" (tobacco merchant), on right.

Another portrait of Louis Gautier (1737-1797), Theophil's paternal great-great grandfather.

Part One
Ancestry and Childhood

Chapter 1
My Ancestors

My ancestors left the City of Troyes in France in 1686.[7] They were able to get through to Geneva and then moved on to Berlin, where the Great Elector[8] welcomed his fellow believers with open arms and gave them new opportunities to establish their livelihoods. The people he took in were industrious and hard-working. They showed themselves to be grateful and useful when they founded a number of new industries in Germany with which they were familiar from their French homeland. The country was war-torn after the recent Thirty Years' War and they helped create new sources of revenue for Brandenburg.

The grandchild of my emigrated ancestor became once again a studied man. He was Privy Councillor of War[9] under Frederick the Great and, after Silesia[10] was acquired, was given the position of director of the tobacco monopoly in the province and made his home in Breslau.[11] Yet, his family was French through and through. His wife was Marie Madeleine Claude, likewise of Huguenot extraction. At the same time, the family had already become German with respect to how they felt. Central here was their love for and their devotion to the ruling House of Hohenzollern. After all, under these rulers, the grandfather had been welcomed and supported. Can I be blamed if I inhabit the same world of thought and have the image of my emperor, Wilhelm II[12]—which he sent me personally and with a dedication in his own hand—hanging on the wall above my desk. Napoleon Bonaparte went to great lengths trying to bring the Huguenots back to France. He did not succeed. Had the old royal

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[8] T.N. Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg.

[9] T.N. *Geheimer Kriegsrat*.

[10] C.D. Silesia, then a province of Austria, was invaded by Frederick II of Prussia in 1740. Silesia now lies mostly in Poland, although it was part of the German Empire when Theophil was born there in 1881.

[11] T.N. Today's Wrocław in Poland.

[12] C.D. German Emperor and King of Prussia.

dynasty remained there, it would likely have been much easier to convince the Huguenots to come back. Is it not moving, like a painful memory, that the first name Louis keeps surfacing in my family with the sons of every new generation?

It is true indeed that our family has become very Germanized through marriages with German women in the past hundred years. The four lines after the aforementioned tobacco director were mostly civil servants, honest and upright. My father, however, became a land surveyor, earned a lot of money and bought a manor in Silesia. That's where my first memories are. But an awareness of our French heritage was passed on from father to son and kept alive. Because I sadly lost my parents very early, I have been very keenly interested in the question of where we came from, and I have made every effort to resolve it since there are gaps in the available records. Especially puzzling was the designation "de Fricourt" that was attached to the name of the émigré in his marriage certificate. This puzzle led me to go to our family's place of origin, Troyes, to see if I could find an answer. Unfortunately, I was not able to find an answer and I came to realize that to do so would take a great amount of work. It was, however, so wonderful there that I truly felt at home and knew that the memory of these hours would always warm me. When it became known why I had come, I was met with a wave of affection. Mireille, the gracious and beautiful waitress with her drawn-out dialect, who was originally from Marseille, anticipated my every wish. As I was having my soup on the first day, I noticed a picture at the bottom of the bowl. It was a depiction of the decapitation of Louis XVI. The executioner was holding up the head, which had just been severed from the body. The bowl was the showpiece of the establishment and serving my soup in it was intended as an honour. I was modest, however, and asked that I be given a simple bowl thereafter. It would seem that for us human beings, it is the greatest pleasure to kill each other and then be proud of it.

In the archive I found so much material that I had to postpone my study. Will there ever be the opportunity to resume it? My most treasured memory is of the secretary of the archivist. She was keen to show me everything but rejected getting on a personal level with me, the foreigner who made mistakes when speaking French. So, I painted a picture for her: Fricourt must be a grand chalet.[13] In this chalet there must be a good wine and champagne cellar. Once this inheritance fell to me, I would have a splendid evening party with gentlemen in buckled shoes and ladies in crinolines. If she could provide her capable assistance, it would be a special pleasure to invite her and she would certainly count among the highlights of the

[13] T.N. He calls this a "Chalet" in German. Presumably, he meant not a small "chalet de montagne" but a country house.

party. At first, she gave no answer, only a distrusting look. But then she began to laugh and she whispered to me: "*Monsieur, je viendrai à votre fête champêtre*." The two of us had found each other, and German-French relations had thus advanced significantly.

What charm Troyes has, the home of my forefathers. What a wealth of buildings from the regal period, all of them generous, powerful and impressive. They still breathed spirit and energy, and one can see the formidable, enduring achievements of an aristocratic rulership that was unlimited in its powers. The counterpart to the massive fiscal buildings is the Ruelle des Chats, which is so narrow that hardly a ray of sunlight gets in. And nevertheless, it is cozy and graceful, and the residents are cheerful and friendly. Delightful too is the wrought-iron filigree work of the great gate of the Hôtel-Dieu, as well as the interior of the Church of Ste. Madeleine, which looks like peaks turned to stone. A museum with unusual treasures, as one will hardly find in a German city of the same size, with a simple representation of "*courage militaire*." What is especially appealing, however, is the "*le vin*" monument, which emphasizes the character of the Champagne region. A young girl and a young boy are turning the grape press and looking at each other impishly. I could not imagine this image being portrayed more beautifully.

In the end I found myself in the various imposing churches. It feels as if there is a superabundance of churches. But here, one must take into consideration that Troyes was the capital of the country at the time when the English occupied all of northern France, until the "Maid of Orléans" took the stage. Still today, the honour of having been the first city of France abides with the inhabitants and their houses like a kind of magic.

Filled with these impressions which stirred me so deeply, I went to the Church of St. Jean, to which my ancestors belonged. It was empty. All that could be heard from outside were quiet sounds from the street. I abandoned myself to the magic of the moment. In front of me was the ancient altarpiece, and all around me the dark brown pews. Did I not see droves of Protestants coming in now, bowing under the weight of their worries and fears, which they could hardly carry, seeking help from God and counsel about the decisions they were making that would have such serious consequences? Had not, on September 26, 1679, my grandfather sat on the very same pew I was sitting on, the apothecary Nicolas G., thanking God for giving him and his wife Marie, née Noel, a son, Remy? He was christened after his godfather, the apothecary Barat, taking his given name Remy, and he also received the first name David. His godmother was Anne, née Testard, the widow of the deceased surgeon Vilain. The godparents signed "*sur la minute*." This was a few years before the abolition of religious freedom. The difficulties the Protestants were

Mathilde Luise Gutke (1808-1878), Theophil's paternal grandmother. Married to Franz Christian Ludwig August Gautier (opposite).

experiencing were almost unbearable, and in the phrase "*sur la minute*," one truly feels the haste with which the signing was done, amidst the fear of repressive measures and dragonnade persecution. Still today, my family and our continent have not found peace. Political tensions, revolutions and wars have followed on the heels of one another without interruption. Burdening us are the difficulties of today and the premonition of coming tragedies. Where is the sense in all of this? I am certain that these are the labour pains of the European spirit and of a New Europe. Towards this goal we must continue to strive and make sacrifices. Our ancestors have shown us how to fight for an idea and, if necessary, die. This places us descendants under an obligation.

Franz Christian Ludwig August Gautier (1801-1847), Theophil's paternal grandfather. Married to Mathilde Luise Gutke (opposite). He was "Koeniglicher Spezial Oekonomie-Kommisarius" (Royal Special Economy Commissioner) for the District of Posen.

Johann Gottlieb Stephany, born 1754, Theophil's maternal great-great grandfather. He was a brewer, later city councillor and state representative. Married to Frederike Henriette Ernestine von Burgsdorff.

Johann Heinrich Stephany, known as Heinrich (1795-1871), Theophil's maternal great-grandfather. Glued to the back of his portrait is a handwritten poem which reads: "Schone Madchen sind geshaffen, fur Soldaten nicht fur Pfaffen, Drum erwahlt ich diesen Orden, Sonst ware ich wohl Pfaff geworden". Translation: "Pretty girls are made for soldiers not for priests, which is why I chose this career, otherwise I would have become a priest".

Theophil Gautier as a toddler at Aslau in Lower Silesia about 1882.

Chapter 2
My Childhood at Aslau in Silesia

Theophil's beloved childhood home, Aslau in Lower Silesia, Germany (now Osla, Poland). He lived here from the time he was born in 1881 until the age of 10 when his father became ill and he was taken in by his mother's brother and wife, Alfred and Ida Stephany, who lived almost 500 miles westward in the Rhineland near Holland. The Aslau property was sold when his father died a year later.

When my aunt Jenny, my mother's sister, was a child, she wrote her Christmas wish list. Her most pressing wish was for a book in which the word "suddenly" would appear as often as possible. This wish gave me a lot to think about as a child and it has certainly had an influence on the shaping of my life. In retrospect, I of course wish that fewer things had happened so suddenly in my life, that it had unfolded somewhat more peacefully. And yet, I have often told my sons that I have had a good, full life and would not have lived it differently. Is this stubborn pride or asininity? This will be a topic of discussion for those walking in the procession behind my coffin.

Plautus of course tried to learn what it was like to have his life judged while he was still alive. After his well-known banquet, he lay down drunk in his coffin and promptly fell asleep. Immediately, the guests got up and made a getaway. What they said while leaving was anything but flattering. But Plautus heard nothing, and as long as he was awake and sober, they only flattered him. This is also characteristic of our time. No one who stands out above the crowd is told the truth. Everyone cowers and takes care not to fulfil the demand that my father drilled into me as the foundation of my education: if only

there was one who would risk his neck and say "that's me." Where are the men who speak and act this way? Those who did so, my dear friends, are all dead, killed by a merciless regime that did not want to hear the truth from them. Now, as one of a few, I am still around, saved, to meditate on this. The faces of my dead friends peer at me, with questions and warnings in their eyes. There is Dr. Goerdeler[14] with his keen courage, his hooked nose, his burning eyes. Walter Cramer, his right hand, smiles kindly. His hair quickly turned white when his only son was taken from him by the war and when the weight of conspiracy increasingly burdened his upright soul, which was free of all secrecy. And not least of all there is von Hassell,[15] who laughed so cheerfully still when we went bowling with friends a few months before the coup.[16]

Have I not become a ridiculous figure, without aim or obligation in life? What remains for me is only fleeing into my own thoughts. To write them down and ease my heart is the purpose of these notes. Part apology, part legacy. Something like a teacher who wags his finger and admonishes his students not to repeat the foolish mistakes he himself was so prone to make.

It is strange how firmly anchored certain impressions of early childhood are in one's memory. It was a summer morning. All of the bedding, mattresses, pillows and blankets were spread out in the front garden of our Silesian manor house in the blazing sun. I soon found myself a comfortable place to lie down and was enjoying lazing about in contented peace, my senses alive. Above me was a cloudless blue sky, the celestial spheres playing what in my ears were the most beautiful melodies. I never wrote them down—in spite of my great love for music, I remained only a bungler when it came to playing it. Thus, I do not need to fear how they might be judged, I just see Wilhelm Busch[17] in the background and his smiling commentary: "Music and noise have much in common." Smile or no smile, the multitudes of bees continued with their buzzing over my head, making music while industriously collecting their honey from the two magnificent linden trees that flanked the corners of the manor house and the front garden. These lindens also serenaded me in the evening when I went to bed. They quietly hummed their own melodies and lulled me to sleep, and their aroma filled my bedroom. Now I am several hours' distance from this place and yet I always

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[14] T.N. This is most likely Carl Friedrich Goerdeler.
[15] T.N. Christian August Ulrich von Hassell.
[16] T.N. He later talks about his involvement in the events of July 20, 1944, i.e. the assassination attempt on Hitler.
[17] C.D. German humourist and poet, 1832-1908.

hear the rustling in my ears: "You would find peace there." An iron curtain[18] separates me from the places of my childhood.

Behind me the elongated, simple manor house. On the ground floor, the reception and living room and on the upper floor the bedrooms and guest rooms. Above them the long attic. It had a special force of attraction. It's where the apples and pears were heaped for household use, and it's where the long rows of sausages, sides of bacon and hams were hung that had been smoked with juniper smoke. And so this attic had its nutritious smells, and during games of hide and seek, we were fond of using it not only for its dark corners. While hiding, I could hear the homey sounds of the large estate.

The farmyard was ring-shaped, bounded by buildings. The lower and upper entrances were protected by gates and grilles, and were locked at night. This made it something of a fortress. To my left was the cowshed and the threshing floor, above this the hay loft, which was a marvellous place to play while the flails were swinging in time and singing their song. My friends, Carl Porrischock and Eva and Liese, were fond of playing with me up there. We got up to a lot of tomfoolery, wrestling and jumping from the high hay loft into the soft depths, and at times we fell down harder than we would have liked. At the time my first love was budding too and Liese was not aloof. Carl was the son of Polish labourers. A truly faithful and beloved friend. He, a young stag and I were inseparable. The reapers had brought the young buck with them one day. He slept on an old, worn-out sofa in the labourers' room. Like all babies, he wet his bed, and the smell was pungent. The friendship lasted until he became a full-grown buck and attacked Carl and me one day, toppling us and trampling us with his legs, and working on us with his not-yet-dangerous antler buds. If the antlers had grown to points, this would have been a disaster. And so it was decided that we would have to be separated, and the next time we went hunting, Father, Carl and I took the little buck with us into the woods, where he soon strayed away from us. He came back to us at the manor house a few times, let himself be petted and spoiled, but then the visits ended and our friend disappeared from view. It was a pain that stung. The loss of this first friend burned in my heart and momentarily darkened my relished sense of comfort. Children's hearts are true.

Carl and I only grew closer because of this. The ties between Castor and Pollux could not have been any stronger. From early in the morning until late at night we carried on together, making

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[18] C.D. The "iron curtain" refers to both the metaphorical (ideological) and the literal (physical) separation that existed after WWII between the territories of the Soviet Union and its communist allies and other Western European nations, often in the form of guarded walls, minefields and watchtowers.

discoveries and experiencing life. On the cherry hill when the cherries were ripe, we sat in the trees and had cherry-eating competitions, eating them with and without the pit. We put spirits bottles on tree trunks and anthills, producing as we called it, "ant spirits". In the barns we hunted sparrows and roasted our exploits, which tasted better to us than anything imaginable on earth. And then it was off to the wainwright, the sound of whose hammer resounded in the farmyard. He had a grindstone on which you could make knives so sharp that they easily cut through any hazel branch.

At Easter, we hunted for eggs together. I was wearing a freshly washed sailor suit and was putting the eggs I found in my pocket. It ended with several softer eggs spilling their yolk which, mixed with melted chocolate, stained my trousers brown—a sauce that ran down my leg. The girls laughed at me and made unflattering comments and my pride was deeply hurt. Carl and I got thinking about revenge. Plans were made in collaboration with other rascals from the village school. When the pumpkins were ripe, we hollowed some of them out and carved faces into them. Then one of us would sit as a rider on the shoulders of another, who was playing the horse, and hold a pumpkin head with a lit candle inside it. Then we wrapped bed sheets around us and with sorrowful whistling sounds we emerged from the barn like ghosts. All the dogs began to bark and the entire farmyard sprang to life. The girls gave out piercing shrieks the moment they looked out of the doors and windows. It was a hellish spectacle until Father and Mother appeared on the scene, laughing, and put an end to our haunting. The satisfaction over this prank made my heart race.

There was a noise over at the horse barn, which adjoined the wheelwright's workshop and the sheepfold on the right and formed the right flank of the farmyard. The doors to the carriage house opened. My patron, the coach driver Heinrich, was waiting for my father, who was expected home from the field soon. The right side of the yard was the servants' house. That's where all of my friends lived, who saw me every day. The previous Sunday I'd been invited to the reeve's family to eat roasted horse. A foal had broken its leg and had to be slaughtered. This was where Eva and Liese lived, who sparked some jealousy because of their close friendship with Carl and me. Behind the servants' house, finally, was the pigsty, the source of all the tasty sausages and hams, which was the only part of that whole mess that interested me. When the poor animals died, it was truly terrible. Just seeing the butcher come with his long knife and his whetstone hanging from his belt filled me with horror. Then I went out into the woods and didn't come back until I had a bundle of juniper on my back and the worst was over.

The smell of the smoking juniper was lovely but even more powerful was that of the heliotrope, my mother's favourite flower. This

aroma was now hanging in the air. It surrounded me like a blanket. The air was vibrating in the midday heat. I felt someone's hand on my forehead. It was my mother, my dear mother. I saw only her large dark eyes. On top of her dark brown hair, whose wonderful fullness framed her so very dear face, was a wide-brimmed white straw hat with a dark ribbon. How magnificently she stood before me, the love in her eyes lighting a fire in my heart that filled my whole little person. Who could say they had as beautiful a mother as I? Who could love her as much as I did? Earlier, before I had dozed off, I had seen how she was kneeling in her heliotrope beds, weeding and picking flowers. Now she was standing there in the full midday sun. Behind her to the right and left were two huge baskets of bright red geraniums, resting on top of two three-foot stumps. This is the image of my mother I have before my inner eye, and it has accompanied me all my life. Mother, my mother! Drunk with life, I clung to you and kissed you. We heard hoofbeats. Father was driving up. Heinrich took the reins. Father, always full of humour and easy pranks, smacked the pony on the side and exchanged a few nice words with Heinrich, and then came storming up, as if he needed to conquer Mother all over again. He took her in his arms, pressed her head into his face—framed, as was the fashion of the day, by a full beard—and embraced her. Holding the hands of these two happy people, I went into the house, protected and warmed by their love.

It would be brazen of me to claim that I still remember my christening. I only know from old letters that my mother took me, her first child, to my christening herself. It took place in the Protestant church in the town of Öls,[19] where I was born, on the border between Silesia and Poland. While the pastor spoke, she sat with a dreamy, happy smile on a garlanded chair next to my father. In her fur-trimmed grey silk dress, she was the picture of a German mother. At this occasion I received a christening coin, a guilder, and it accompanied me faithfully all my life. Today I always carry it on me like a talisman and it gives me the feeling that I still enjoy the protection that my godparents, as long as they lived, afforded me. They lifted me then above the font. Written in raised old-fashioned letters on the guilder are the words: "*Wohl dem, der Freude an seinen Kindern erlebt. Helfs uns die Heilig Dreifaltigkeit*." ("Blessed is he who delights in his children. May the Holy Trinity help us.") And on the reverse: "*Du sollst Deinen Vater und Deine Mutter ehren, auf dass es Dir wohlgehe*." ("Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee.") This exhortation influenced me. In the short years in which I was able to have my parents around me, I hope that I did not violate it. And later, when I was a father myself, I always had these dictums in mind. I tried to find a relationship like this

[19] T.N. Today Oleśnica, Poland.

with my children and to live in such a way that it would become second nature to them to fulfil this demand. In this way, this inconspicuous christening coin had an enduring influence. Unless something happens to it, my sons shall have it and its exhortations shall be passed on in these times of dissolution.

In the years in which I discovered the world around me and was led by my mother's guiding hand, I shared a special relationship and bond with her. I remember clearly how I experienced her care as so soothing when I was ill. A wick on a layer of oil floating in a full glass of water burned in the night. The whole room lay in mystical half-light. My bed was right next to my parents' bed and my mother woke up instantly at the slightest sound I made. I was safe and secure beyond measure.

Separated by the large vegetable garden but visible from the back windows of the manor house lay the distillery, where spirits were distilled from potatoes. I can still smell the pleasant aroma of the slop, a waste product and valuable animal feed. Smoke rose from the tall chimney, and inside, in the boiler room and near the large fermenting vats there was always entertainment. I had interesting conversations with the stokers. One day they were quick to pull me out of the little pond near the entrance when I fell through the ice. My clothes dried quickly in the boiler room and I was spared an embarrassing confession. When I was older, I romped around with the other children. And in this way, I turned into a real farm boy. I owe my successes in life, such as they were, to this healthy upbringing. They had their basis in a happy way of interacting with other people. I believe that all the soldiers and sailors who had something to do with me in my long years of service remember me with fondness, just as I will always remember them with feelings of devotion and obligation. I associated with them as I did with my play-friends, understanding their hearts' desires and speaking their language. During the hard war years, when I sailed ahead with my lead ship and was thus in considerable danger, my men were happy to be assigned to my boat. And my batmen, Hadasch and Schwarz, who assisted me in my last ten years of service, still correspond with me today.

In the vegetable garden, there was everything you could possibly want. Instructed by Mother, I learned how to cut white asparagus out of the ground and became very enthusiastic about this. I bundled the asparagus and got it ready for shipping. Also growing in the garden were glowing red tomatoes, still a rare fruit at the time. Today, the whole world eats tomatoes.

But it was even more alluring to go to the orchard that was next to the garden. Grapes grew on the warm south wall of the distillery. There were also dozens of fruit trees of every variety. Indeed, I imagine that I have never since eaten golden yellow plums as delicious as the ones in that orchard. Carl and I would sit in the trees like

starlings. Farther up, an artificial hill held the summer's worth of ice that was so necessary for the kitchen and for business on the estate. From it came the melancholy sounds of an Aeolian harp that was stirred to life with every gust of wind. These sounds, like the tolling of the village church bells, still ring in my ears and in my heart. The sounds of home. The orchard was also home to the fish pond. In the night, the carp and pike would jump out of the water and fall back in with a slap. The sound was so distinct in the quiet summer nights, when the linden trees were making their music and the estate workers were singing their songs. It was all joy, all love, and the sandman sprinkled his sand with such gentle fingers that one didn't even notice when reality blended with dreams. On this pond, we also went skating in winter. My mother was a very skilful and agile skater. My parents had met at their local skating rink, and got engaged there too. Mother gave me lessons, and I soon learned how to do modest turns. But that is as far as I got. Later, when Mother was gone, there was no teacher.

For her birthday, Mother received a team of ponies and a carriage from my father. Now we were mobile. We sat next to each other in the carriage or in the sleigh. Mother held the elegant red reins in her hand and we rode through forests and fields, often to dairies and merchants who would take our milk and produce. Do you know how taken with his mother a little fellow can be, how proud of her? A mother who can do anything, a mother to whom every man, beaming, lifts his hat when she arrives, radiant, smiling and lovely with youth. What devotion I felt in the sweeping summer woods when she made fairy tales come alive for me on every path, behind every tree. And who got to cut down the Christmas tree himself with his mother and bring it home? Wrapped in furs and sunken into a deep footmuff, all I could hear was the sound of bells. Now and then a branch would release its white burden and wild animals would scurry off. And between us there was the silence of a limitless bond, which needed no words to say how much we loved each other.

In addition to managing the fruit and vegetables and overseeing the kitchen operations for our own household and our numerous staff, my mother also took care of the dairy. Valuable goods went through my mother's hands and for Father, she was a real partner. The dairy was located in the deep cellar beneath the rooms we lived in. The manor house was built into a hill. The front side adjoined the front garden at ground level, but in the back, there was a drop. These cellar rooms had heavy dome vaults with pointed arches and extraordinarily thick walls, making them cool and dry and thus suitable for a dairy. What plenitudes of butter, quark, and milk! And a beloved brand of cheese on the market came from our own production. In a side wing of the cellar, the heavy door had a lock of a positively ancient design. That was where the petroleum was stored.

After all, this was before electric lights. I was allowed inside only rarely and always trembled. The smell, the darkness and the precautionary measures made me shudder in my skin. Not only this, but the maids told scary stories about murderous deeds and rotting skeletons which, walled in down there, were slumbering away until Judgement Day. With an imagination running wild, I often looked at the stone coat of arms of the von Hake family, and could clearly hear and see how the knights in shining armour, plumes bobbing on their helmets, would return home from battle against the ever-encroaching East, which was somewhere beyond the cherry hill, the place where the workers lived who came in the summer to hay, their language hard to decipher. How often I was scared when these men got drunk and, yelling, would attack each other with knives. That's when Father would jump up, grab the whip from the stand and throw himself into the melee along with the inspector and the reeve. When the fighting cocks had slept it off, they gratefully kissed Father's hand. It was especially impressive when occasionally one of the guilty parties was handcuffed and thrown in the village jail to calm down. Order reigned, and with it, respect and peace.

It was also very enjoyable to go out with the shepherd, who drove the sheep out to pasture with his dog. The abilities of this peculiar, taciturn and all the while highly esteemed man were amazing to behold. He knew the names of the plants and birds, composed poetry, knew of medicines and treatments for all illnesses, and knew not only many things about the past but could also foresee the future. When we sat together in the deepest tranquility, surrounded by the teeming masses of sheep, the slices of buttered bread we ate tasted so good. One day before it was time to shear, we drove the sheep to the pond. A footbridge made of boards had been built across it, and on it sat several women with long, hooked staffs. The sheep had to swim through the pond to be cleaned and were moved along with the help of these staffs. I fell into the water from the bridge, and had I not been pulled up with one of the staffs, I would have likely met an early end. In any case, I swallowed a lot of water and declared that I had already seen angels.

I had two more accidents that I remember well. One time I fell down the stairs of the dairy with a loud thudding and then a scream. It was a nasty fall and I cracked my chin open. Still today, I have to pay attention to the scar when I shave. The other time, Heinrich drove up to pick us all up. My parents weren't ready yet so he did a few loops with the carriage in the farmyard. I quickly climbed up into the carriage and fell out again. One of the back wheels went over my leg. But because it was a light hunting carriage, I came away with just a few painful bruises. And in this way I gained experience

and entered life. “First you have it good, my son, but just you wait, you’ll be had anon.”[20]

And then came the time when my glorious freedom, my adventurer and buccaneer excursions with faithful Carl at my side, were sadly curtailed. School started. At first the situation was quite bearable. One morning, I found placed in front of my bed a beautiful leather satchel covered in seal fur, a pencil case with slate-pencils, a slate with a sponge hanging from it, and coloured pencils. After breakfast—we were, as was common for country households, early risers—the satchel was slung around my shoulders and I went alone down the path I knew so well to the village school. On my right and left, I was joined by my fellow sufferers and there was anticipation in the air. We felt important. But the most pleasant surprise awaited us. The teacher had a bag with delicious snacks for each of us. Following an old custom, these had been given to the teacher the previous day by the pupils’ good parents. We returned home enthusiastically.

In my father’s office, a desk and chair were set up for me where I could do my homework. It was a cozy spot. Above me ticked the tall remontoire clock whose pendulum swung unceasingly back and forth. Next to it, in large rectangular frames, were the oil paintings of my father’s parents, Franz Christian August Louis and Mathilde. Father’s mahogany desk stood in one corner and in the other was a bookshelf in front of which was an oval-shaped mahogany table that was polished to a sheen, and a sofa and chairs with rich green ribbed upholstery. In the winter, the white masonry stove with a built-in compartment closed off with a shiny brass door made its rumbling sounds, the aromatic smell of roasting apples emanating from it. It was always such a joy to work alongside Father. His handwriting was very nice, and he was very good at calculating, even without the use of his fingers. He would show me some unusual instruments. An air bubble moved through an elongated, water-filled tube, and, by turning a small brass screw, you could make it go in the middle position. Then we looked through a telescope with crosshairs, and he focussed on the chimney of the distillery. Father was, after all, an engineer, and the instruments were from the time when he was doing drainage work as a drainage technician and earning well. Modern engineering science, shaped by steam and electricity, was in its incipience and he was one of its disciples. And so, with Father, I learned playfully and always with great enjoyment. I soon had a solid foundation that made my life easier during all the years I went to school.

But the actual time at school was all the more tedious and spiritually dulling. There, the cane ruled and things which for me made

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[20] T.N. *“Zuerst hast du es gut, mein Sohn, doch pass mal auf, man kommt dir schon.”* A quote from Wilhelm Busch’s *Die Haarbeutel*.

no sense and were of no interest were doggedly drummed into our heads. Always as a chorus, we responded, counted and recited. Still today, my memory of the ten commandments is terrifyingly strong. We had to say them aloud time and again, and this torture positively made us want to do the opposite of what we were being asked. What was more interesting, however, were some of the old hymns, which were about the lust of the flesh and other nice things, as with *"Ich armer Sündenknochen*" ("I am a Poor Sinner"). We turned into real rascals. The fact that boys and girls were herded together in the morning and also, as was the custom at the time, in the afternoon, and walked to and from school alone together had consequences. We gained, as is common in the countryside, knowledge at a young age. But by its own nature, our shared experience of health, freedom, and a rough and tumble life kept wicked things from happening. We developed very naturally and this was certainly less dangerous than the way things can be for children in large cities.

All of us grew up to become capable farmers, soldiers and workers who did what needed to be done. My friend Carl became the reeve of our outlying estate. When we were grown, we occasionally saw each other, but we never had the feeling that we weren't the same old friends when we shook hands, he in his simple worker's clothing and I in my officer's uniform. His last letter was devoted, loyal, and natural, just as things were when we were school friends. At the time, during World War I, I was a torpedo boat operator in Zeebrügge. He was in a trench not far from me at the Flanders front. He never came home. He lies buried in foreign soil. His life was straight as an arrow, full of duty, faithfulness, work, and honour. His Polish name and Polish parents did not act as an impediment. His death calls on us Germans to rise up past the present-day hatred and reconcile with the Polish, after we have caused each other so much pain. Just as individual friendships are possible, so a friendship between our peoples must also be possible.

My brother Etienne had been born two years previously. He was a healthy little boy with brown curls that framed his head and neck. In my memory, I see him in his brown velvet overalls with a white ruff and lovely dark brown eyes. I found it hard to know what to do with him. He was too small to be a playmate, and he didn't understand me when I spoke. Yet, I felt a kind of satisfaction when I was around him and my affection for him was instinctual. My parents' joy knew no limits and I for my part was quite willing to accept that they would now be focussing more attention on him. There was still enough left over for me. How different it now was, with four of us in the carriage. The local women were happy to see the estate owners, especially the mother when she presented her two boys with womanly pride. The men, too, gave their greetings, as Father was a capable agriculturalist and did not set himself off from them. He was also

district officer[21] and had shown skill in clearing up many a concern and dispute. As lord of the manor, he was mild and just. And I for my part was met by many familiar faces, whose eyes laughed and winked at me. The young albeit bourgeois squire was known in all the houses and families. People liked me, as I could feel without explaining it to myself.

This winter, it got cold early. There was already snow on the ground in November. I was sitting with my little brother on the windowsill. Between the doubled-up windows there were thick pads of moss with paper flowers that I had helped make. We were watching the falling snowflakes, which were slowly covering everything in a blanket. There was complete silence in the farmyard, and a celebratory stillness in our hearts as well. The following day Etienne had a sore throat and stayed in bed. There were no telephones at the time. Before the messenger could get the message to the doctor in the neighbouring village, and before this doctor was able to come, diphtheria had set in. I was dutifully separated and felt very worried when I didn't see my parents and brother for days. Then, suddenly, I was fetched. I felt a dull sense of foreboding in my throat. What I then saw is one of the pictures that became etched in my memory, never to be forgotten. At the window stood my mother, my brother in her arms. Next to her stood my father. Both my parents were pale, fatigued and haggard. Mother was sobbing heart-rendingly. Her whole body was shaking. Father had tears in his eyes and had an arm around Mother. My little brother did not reach out to me with his hand like he always did. He wasn't moving. Etienne was dead. I couldn't understand entirely yet, but I cried and these tears drove away the furious pain that lunged at me like a rabid dog. But it would not be until years later that I would understand the immensity of the loss, the absence that would be there for my entire life. When later I was all alone and had to rely entirely on myself, how I yearned for you, my dear brother. How I wished to have you by my side, to be able to help you and to be loved by you. The greatest desolation is felt by the man who has nothing to hang his heart on.

A few days later, the small coffin was taken to our cemetery, and Etienne was buried. I remember the plot precisely and believe that I could find it easily today. From the wrought-iron gate, one keeps to the right and there is the spot at the churchyard wall, under the branches of a large linden tree that is in front of the church door and reaches out over the wall. There Etienne sleeps his eternal sleep. The linden keeps rustling its leaves, speaking to him just as we so often

[21] T.N. He was an "*Amtsvorsteher*," according to the Prussian district regulations of December 13, 1872, for the eastern provinces, the police officer appointed for an official district.

heard when we were going to sleep: “Come to me, my friend, you will find your peace here!”

This stroke of fate was utterly terrible. It was the hoar frost that descended in the springtime night of our happiness. Now in my old age I know that Mother never got over the loss, even though life went back to its usual rhythm.

On my next birthday, in February, my parents gave me a crossbow and bolts with lead tips. This came with a target with pictures of animals that fell off when you hit them. Soon I was a surprisingly good shot. One shot, one hit—the poor sparrows that were trying to bed down for the night in the branches of the trees in the front garden had no more peace. The caps that went off with every shot made a bang. I carried a box of them in my pants pocket. As could have been expected, one of these red caps got stuck between the edges of the box and, because of the friction, there was an explosion. The whole little box blew up and I got painful burns. I had been taught “never to torture an animal because it feels pain just like you.” Now I was told that this was the punishment for my having caused so much terror with my crossbow and for not having listened to the admonition. This gave me cause to reflect and I searched within myself. But a passion for hunting had been kindled in me. Through this early shooting practice, I became a very good shot. Later, as a young officer, I was able to win an imperial saber of honour because of it. Of the approximately one thousand officers at the Baltic Sea naval base, I had the highest shooting score.

Now Mother wanted me at her side more again, and I helped her in the dairy and in the orchard. Two more full and peaceful years went by. One evening after she’d kissed me goodnight, Mother said that she hoped my little brother would come back, our dear God wanted to send him back so that we would not be sad anymore. Mother’s feelings of happiness poured over me and it felt as if the old boisterous happiness and levity were about to return. My parents were more joyful again, as affectionate with each other as I remembered them being, teasing each other. One summer day, Mother and I were in the front garden, which was fragrant with heliotropes, and it felt to me as if all would be well once more. The mailman arrived, delivering the daily mail to the estate. Then he exchanged a few words with Mother that I did not understand. But I did see how Mother grew pale and her eyes moistened. Then she took me in her arms and said in a terribly sorrowful voice: “The emperor is dead. This is the second emperor who will be laid to rest this year. Our poor fatherland.” It was the news of the death of Emperor Frederick III that had touched Mother so deeply. The political unrest was great and the coming entanglements were already casting a shadow on the present.

And then came the dreadful days. One night, in September, there was a light frost. When Mother was going down the stairs to the dairy, she slipped and fell down the stairs. Bloody and moaning, she was carried into the house and put to bed. The doctor's face looked apprehensive. There was an unusual commotion in the house. A nurse came, a cousin of my father. Everything became quiet and muffled. In the night I was awoken by the moans of my poor mother. Despite being drunk with sleep, I could sense that something unusual was happening. I began to cry. Mother waved me over to her bed. Father stood beside her, holding her hand. It looked as though he himself were severely ill. Then Mother looked at me again with her large, dark eyes and all love was united in this gaze. She pulled her wedding ring off her finger, gave it to me and asked me to love Father in her place. Then she placed her hand on my head as if to bless me. She told me to grow into a good person. A stream of blood from her mouth interrupted her words. I was taken away. The little brother who was supposed to arrive had cost Mother her life following her fall. Father suffered dreadfully. The next day, we went to the fields together and three days later Mother was taken to the cemetery in an endless funeral procession and buried alongside Etienne. I can still hear the muffled sounds of the clods of earth falling. It was all so unspeakably dreadful. Father and I often went to the double grave and decorated it. It was surrounded by a low iron fence. On the church wall, at the heads of the dead, a white marble stone with gold lettering told of the lives and deaths of the two who lay beneath it. *Omnes eodem cogimur*, all of us will walk the same path.

Mother's mother, Grandmother Auguste, came for the funeral and stayed with us for good. Henceforth, with the exception of one short interruption, she would take me under her wing until I passed my final high school examinations and set off on my own. How vividly I still see her before me. Over her white part she wore a small black bonnet, with two wide, fluttering ribbons that could be tied under her chin if necessary. Her face was wrinkled, with cheerful eyes shining out of it, and her mouth was almost toothless, containing just a few remnants of past magnificence which laboriously chewed whatever was conveyed to them. The mouth, in fact, was constantly being offered something and was constantly in motion. Never did I see my grandmother wear any colour besides black. After all, she had also been dealt some severe blows in the previous years. Not long before my mother's death, the two of us had visited my grandparents in Halle. My grandfather, a civil servant and reserve officer, died shortly after our visit. My grandmother's youngest daughter, my aunt Jenny, with her two children Kurt and Ilse all passed away in quick succession, followed by her daughter Lucie, my mother. As a child, one is egotistical and hardly has any understanding of the suffering of others, but I know now how poor

Grandmother's heart was broken, and why she looked after me with an almost comical degree of attention and care.

Soon she was at work all around the estate and she kept everyone on their toes. Nothing escaped her eyes, and she cracked down quite firmly on any mistakes. Only her hearing got worse. She had to get an ear trumpet which, in addition to her glasses, was her constant companion. When Grandmother was in her lovely large room, which Father had given her and nicely furnished, she would sit in a comfortable armchair at the window, looking out at the orchard and vegetable garden and the distillery. As soon as I came in, she would put her trumpet to her ear. In this way I could communicate with her without having to raise my voice much.

When her birthday came, I enthusiastically wished her a happy birthday and then awaited with bated breath the great surprise that I knew was coming. Suddenly there was noise out in the yard, which sounded like it was getting closer to the door, into which stepped my father. Dressed in full Biedermeier style, he had donned the apparel of his father, who had died young. Like me, the staff all found this very amusing and everyone came together to enjoy the show. In one hand, he was holding a grey top hat, in the other a massive bouquet of potato blossoms, and he recited a birthday poem he had written himself that was replete with insinuations. The two of them enjoyed teasing each other so much and Grandmother was very moved by this tribute.

And so, life straightened itself out again, outwardly. It is understandable that Father and I were very close. He focused his whole love on me. Soon, at the age of nine, I understood the estate economics quite well. I accompanied my father everywhere. Tell and Flock, the two gun dogs, were with us as well. Father also taught me the basics of hunting. He gave me a *Tesching* gun as a gift. Time and again, he impressed upon me the necessity of an enormous amount of caution with every weapon, especially firearms, and of respect for life of every kind. These lessons soon became second nature to me. I truly became an unbelievably good shot and brought a number of wild animals to the ground. I rarely missed the target. Father also taught me to keep my eyes and ears alert and to pay attention to everything. We followed tracks and knew the game paths. When poachers laid snares, we put branches or mushrooms in them so that they would become unusable. Thus, Father and I were together almost every free minute and ours was almost a true friendship of men. Father Christmas gave me one of the Robinson Crusoe books with many pictures, which made it all the more interesting. In especially good times, father read it to me. I was allowed to crawl into bed with him; a lamp was lit on the bedside table and there were also apples, nuts and gingerbread. Oh, how exciting it was, at once so thrilling and so cozy. But at times, Father put the book down and

reminded me of my mother in whose bed I now slept and we talked to each other about some of our very dear memories. The pain was anchored deep in Father's heart, and there was nothing that could undo the loss. At times he complained of pain, too, and in these moments, he also looked bad, and old. This made me worry. In fact, his vital energy was being consumed at the time as he dealt with the immense grief and also the economic worries, of which I was aware. I can still see clearly in my mind how Father paced his office on the nights when the wages were to be paid, brooding about how he was going to stay "liquid." Later, as the director of an iron foundry, I would experience this torture first hand and come to know how much energy is consumed by such hardship.

When it was time for me to go to the Gymnasium,[22] Father had to part company from me. He sent me to the Gymnasium in the neighbouring town and I, along with a fellow student called Alfred, were lodged at the guest house of a widow. Alfred was an absolute overachiever, a distinguished student and a bloodless pedant. Ours was not a great friendship. In this new environment, I began to wilt. And there wasn't enough to eat. Alfred taught me to eat broken chocolate sold at the grocer's for 10 pfennigs to fight the hunger. I was also missing fresh air and light, freedom and exercise and above all the love of my father and grandmother. For these reasons, every weekend was a fest and a feast. Father would be standing at the main entrance, waiting to pick me up. At a hotel called "Zum Kronprinzen", where Father was staying, we would eat a decent meal and then Heinrich would drive us home in the yellow carriage, which took a good hour. Often the glowing sun beat down on us and we dozed off. The ears of the two brown horses swayed with the beat of their trotting, the wheels crunched, and I was back in my realm and had everything around me that I loved and that defined my life. Still today, I don't like to think back to the dreadful separation on Sunday evenings, when I was returned. One time, when I had been let off at the edge of town, I began yelling loudly and ran after the carriage with Father in it. I had to see Father one more time and feel how he loved me, before the grey week began in the guest house with the landlady and her family, which in its lovelessness was almost repulsive to me.

The school itself was nice. It was a pretty, modern building with bright, spacious classrooms and lots of room to run around outside in the parks that surrounded the school. And the teachers were good. I found it easy to learn and I felt comfortable at school. I found natural history particularly interesting. I was familiar with flowers and animals and I learned many new things as well. On the

[22] T.N. A secondary school, the "Gymnasium" would likely have started in grade 5 (age 9 or 10) at the time.

weekend when I was home, I would hold forth about these subjects in a dignified manner. I also made new friends, the sons of nearby estate owners. But they couldn't replace my old friends. My heart belonged entirely to my dear home and nothing could be its equal.

And what nonsense the other estates were getting up to! In the neighbouring estate, a society of children got together over the holidays, and they were hosting a masquerade ball. With very mixed feelings, I went there with Grandmother, although I would have much preferred to go hunting with Father, who also deemed the invitation ludicrous. But Grandmother dug in her heels. After we arrived, we were served cake and chocolate milk, and then we were allowed to romp around a little. Some of us, including me, decided to take a dip in the palace pond. When we got out of the water, leeches were attached to us, and it took a great deal of effort to pull them off. I was utterly disgusted. Then it was time to put on our costumes. Grandmother, in complete misapprehension of the proud soul of a first-year boy of a secondary school, had made me a cute Little Red Riding Hood costume. It was very becoming and I no doubt made a very pretty lass. But I felt incredibly uneasy in girls' clothing and was relieved when the nightmare was over.

One day Father stayed in bed; he was feeling badly. The doctor was called, and when Father didn't get better after several days, Heinrich and I took him to the hospital in town, which he would never leave again. He would suffer a lingering illness for a year. On the ride back home, I began to agonize about what would happen. I felt the heavy weight of all the responsibilities that lay ahead of me.

Deus me non amavit. This saying is inscribed on the gravestone of a troop leader of the Thirty Years' War. God did not love me. How many disappointments, deprivations, futilities and violent acts must the poor devil have experienced to arrive at this final outcry? To me, it almost seems as if God did not love me back then. He let me drain the cup of pain down to the dregs.

Now, having been called by my grandmother, my mother's brother was with us. He was a strapping, handsome man with a well-groomed appearance, a former cavalry officer, who was now retired and leading a very comfortable life with his wealthy wife, my dear aunt Ida. But his idleness had done him no good. He was a "*malade imaginé*" [imaginaire], constantly fussing about his health and trying treatments, which made him very irritable. Although I recognize that he was an upright man who meant me well, our relationship was cool. My fear of him became the driving force behind my thoughts and actions. The difference between this relationship and the one between my father and me was immeasurable. And so began my deep loneliness. During school, I often visited Father at the hospital. But he was already in such a miserable state, unable to interact with me, that I returned to the guest house feeling all the more

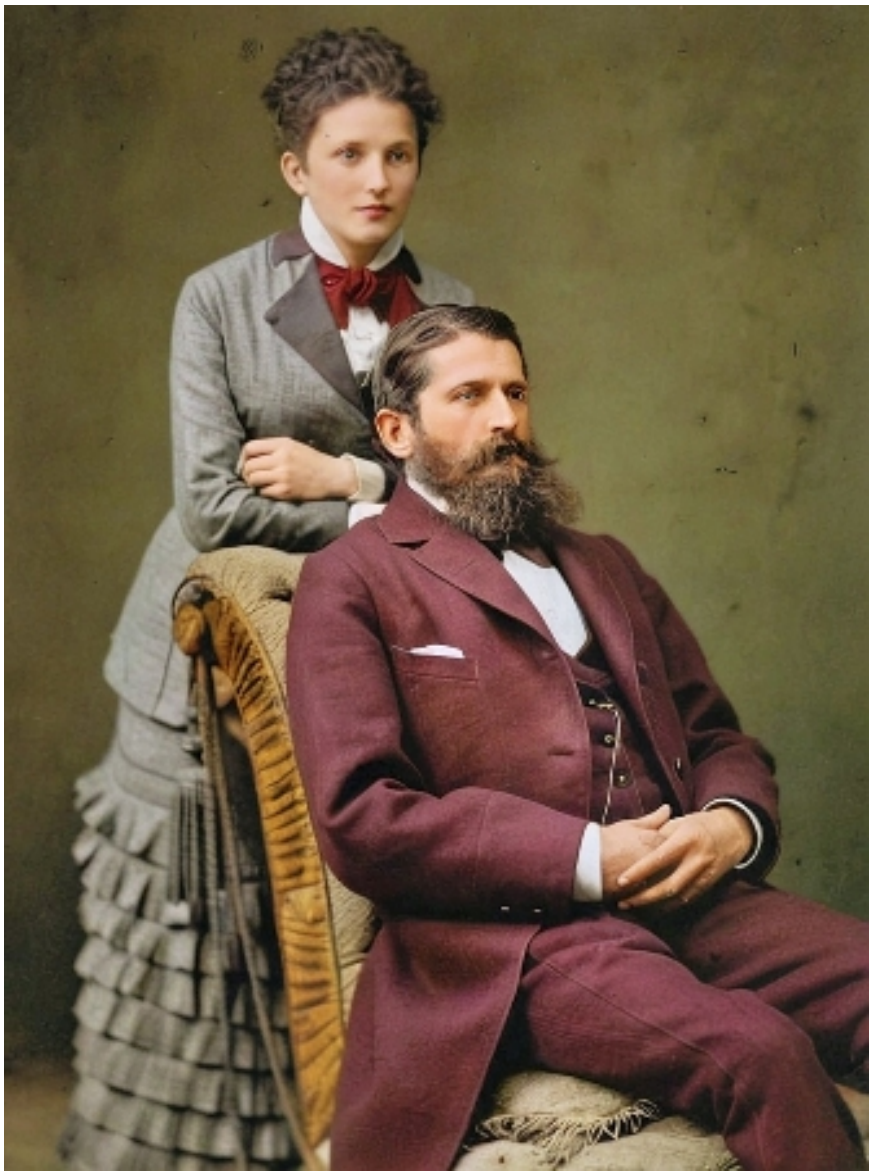
wretched, my world falling to pieces. When it became clear that Father would not be well again, my uncle decided to sell the estate. One might just as well have torn my heart from my chest. It meant giving up what was precious to me. The way things are today, in the time of the Oder–Neisse line, it ultimately does not matter one way or another which decision was made back then. But in principle, one should never let the soil that one possesses leave one's hands. It would have been better to find a lessee for the estate.

Then came the departure. One morning Heinrich was standing in front of the manor house with the brown horses. It was terrible, and there was nothing anyone could do to help me in my grief. I bottled up the pain. I also had to part company with Grandmother. She stayed until the keys were handed over to the new owners. I said goodbye to Father one last time. My beloved father, your heart was broken, too. When I closed the door upon leaving, we both knew that we'd never see each other again. Six months later, I was an orphan at the age of eleven.

Theophil's maternal grandfather, Johann Friedrich Ernst Stephany (1823-1887), known as Ernst. He died when Theophil was six years old.

Theophil's mother, Johanna Lucie Stephany (1855-1888), known as Lucie. She was born at Goch in the Rhineland and died age 33 at the family home at Aslau near Bunzlau in Lower Silesia when Theophil was seven years old. At that time Silesia was part of Germany. It later became part of Poland.

Theophil's father, Etienne George Louis Gautier (1839-1892), known as Etienne, a land surveyor and drainage engineer in Lower Silesia. He died age 53 in hospital at the town of Bunzlau,Germany (now Boleslawiec, Poland) near the family estate at Aslau in Lower Silesia, when Theophil was only 11 years old, leaving Theophil as an orphan.



Theophil's parents, Lucie and Etienne Gautier, photo taken at Breslau, Germany (now Wroclaw, Poland) in Lower Silesia about 1886.

Theophil with his mother, Lucie, when Theophil was about six years old in 1886, photo taken at Bunzlau in Lower Silesia.

Aslau manor house today, abandoned and forgotten following use as headquarters of a collective farm after the Second World War, a far cry from the 1880s when Aslau was Theophil's palatial boyhood home.

Top: two coffee or tea cups lined in gold bearing the names of Etienne and Lucie Gautier when they lived in luxury in their Aslau manor house; the cups are now prized possessions of Christa Gautier Dunn. Bottom: upstairs interior stairway of the abandoned house today, up and down which young Theophil no doubt ran.

Ida and Alfred Stephany, wife and husband, with whom Theophil lived in Wiesbaden after his parents died. Alfred was Theophil's mother's brother. Theophil adored Ida but was less fond of Alfred.

Chapter 3
My Boyhood at Wiesbaden

Now it was time to travel westward by train with Aunt Ida, a trip that felt endless to me. In the few days that my aunt had been at my family home, I found her very pleasant. During the trip, I learned to love her, and for the rest of my life, there would always be a close bond between the two of us. She came from a wealthy Rhineland merchant family. Her grandfather, a chicory producer, had made a fortune when there was no coffee during the Napoleonic Continental Blockade. She was a woman of slightly below average height who was a touch on the plump side, a very enjoyable woman who had been reared well. She was socially adept and quick-witted with a great sense of humour, and she spoke French and English quite well. She had fun with me, her stiff nephew who had been raised in completely different circumstances, and she did everything to try and brighten my day. If I was spared damage to my soul in the following months when I retreated into myself and concealed all feelings from the outside world, it is only because of this clever and kind woman.

The large and beautiful cities, the Rhine with its ships, the vineyards and castles, and the busy train traffic all made powerful impressions on me. And then we arrived in Wiesbaden, my new home. We lived in a comfortable apartment occupying a whole floor on Adolfstraße, and later in a beautiful villa with a garden, stables with horses and a carriage, and other comforts on Frankfurter Straße. Later, when she was a widow, Aunt Ida travelled only in the comfort of her carriage, taking her time and enjoying the ride. She reminded me a lot of Frau Aja, Goethe's mother. She must have been the same type of person. In front of our house on Adolfstraße there was, to my astonishment, a steam railway, which ran from Adolfshöhe to Biebrich am Rhein. My room, which was comfortably furnished, had a window facing the courtyard. Everywhere there were walls, gates, and houses. Where were my linden trees and heliotrope beds? My boundless freedom had given way to being limited to close quarters, without any connection to nature. How did people live like this? It was hardly possible to breathe, the air was so thick, and it was especially moist and warm in this city. The heavy meals that abounded in meat, rémoulade, and oily salads, as well as wine at lunch and dinner, which stood in an ice bucket next to my uncle's place at the table, were foreign to me and required serious adjustment for my body. Another thing was that it embarrassed me that I was sent out to the various vendors with a basket every day to do the grocery shopping. The maids liked to shirk this duty and it made me feel so

ashamed. My classmates always had a giggle over it when they ran into me and all my pride reared up in opposition.

Having changed schools meant that I was behind in certain subjects, and so I brought home poor report cards at first. Every one of my deficient written compositions had to be shown to my uncle, who had to write "seen" to indicate that he had seen it. And each time he would become horribly upset and I would tremble with fear. One time, I denied the poor result as long as I could, but ultimately, I had to confess the truth. If it had been terrible to experience the guilt before, now it was a catastrophe. My uncle declared me a habitual liar, refused to shake my hand or to speak with me at all and would lock me in a dark room when I got home from school so that I "would learn to mend my ways." If only he had known how I felt! I would summon the images of Father and Mother, the memory would warm me, and then I would weep inconsolably, an icy loneliness in my heart. This was seen as "mending my ways."

The truth was that I closed myself off completely and was in a very precarious state of mind. As a result, I seriously entertained the thought of running away somewhere, anywhere, as long as I could escape this torture. Because of my rural upbringing, I was used to exertions and they did not scare me. My need for freedom and my strong self-assurance were in a powerful state of revolt. If these plans did not come to fruition, it is only because I was waiting for the right moment and because certain preparations were necessary. I began to save my pocket money assiduously. And in general, I shut myself up within myself. Behind a polite face, I concealed all feelings and this aspect could have become pathological had not my good aunt exercised her mitigating influence. The worst thing was that my uncle told my teacher about my white lies and he too gave me a stern talking to after class. Although I shed many a tear during his sermons, I could also sense human understanding and kindness, and the positive result was that in the future he was particularly affectionate and caring toward me.

The horror of the dreadful cholera epidemic, which was raging in Hamburg at the time soon acted as a distraction, incidentally, and my problems at school retreated to the background. Soon I was a good student again. However, in my memory this time is an example of pedagogical ideas gone amiss and I remember it not only with trepidation but also with a sense of having learned something from it. If only one could remember in all situations that one gets a lot further with kindness than with severity in the majority of cases.

Slowly, I settled in, and I thought less and less of plans for escape. Not only this, but as I got older, the more my relationship with my uncle improved, who surely always meant well. He was a strange character. Looking through his monocle, he scrutinized my suit and posture as if I were a recruit. The worst was running into him on my

way to school on Wilhelmstraße. He recognized me from afar, put his monocle in his eye, and called out from a distance of several yards, "You've got a grease stain on your jacket." Passersby, idlers, guests of the local spa and many foreigners all stopped in amusement to enjoy this intermezzo. At certain times of day, which he observed religiously, he drank his *Kochbrunnen*.[23] For this purpose, he always carried a small drinking glass on his person. On the whole, he led quite an unhealthy life, reading until midnight and then getting up late in the morning. Then he would take a cold shower to wake himself up. Added to this were the heavy meals and the wine which he drank regularly, though not immoderately. And so, he died before reaching the age of sixty, at a time when I no longer lived with him, however. My aunt Ida survived him by twenty years, and in these long years our relationship grew warm and close.

Of her two sons, I was quite close to the younger one. The last time I saw him was in the First World War in Zeebrügge, when I was a torpedo boat operator there. He was a pilot officer and was killed late in the war, in March 1918. I can still see him boarding the train in Blankenberghe, on his way to his airfield in Valenciennes. He smiled and waved, an embodiment of Rhineland *joie de vivre*.

This makes me think of a story that Udet[24] told me. One day, during lunch hour, he was coming home from a successful sortie. In the officers' club, everyone was eating. Not one comrade paid him any attention. He got back in his plane, flew a loop, pulled off his heavy aviation boots and threw them down on the corrugated iron roof of the mess hall. Now everyone came charging out and things turned into a lot of fun.

But I would like to write more about Wiesbaden. In the summer, we would take the steam train to Biebrich every afternoon. At the swimming facilities on the island of Rettbergsaue, I learned to swim. What a pleasure. For me, swimming still remains the mother of all blissful recreations. Later, on a number of different occasions, I would owe my life to being a strong swimmer. During the summer holidays, we would take turns going to Belgian and German seaside resorts. From a pier in Blankenberghe, a young girl fell into the sea near us one day. The rescue mission in which we then participated was quite exciting. For me, as someone who had grown up in a landlocked area, the raw wind and the rough, broken sea were a special event. Dreaming, I peered at the horizon and followed the plumes of

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[23] T.N. Water from a Wiesbaden hot spring, for medicinal purposes.

[24] C.D. Ernst Udet was the second-highest scoring German fighter pilot of the First World War after Baron Manfred von Richthofen. He was Chief of Procurement and Supply for the Luftwaffe in the Second World War. In that position he may have known Theophil because of Theophil's Luftwaffe position as Armaments-Inspector in Vienna (April 1938-April 1944).

smoke from steamships that were sailing off to the lands of my bizarre imagination. The sea had me under its spell.

We also liked to go to a property the family owned on the Rhine. It was magically and beautifully situated on a high bank, had a large park and adjoined one of the old castle ruins. In front of the house was a terrace with a walnut tree on it. Below, the river teemed with traffic, trains of barges and passenger ships pressing forward. Below us, trains rushed by on both banks. Opposite were castles steeped in legend, woven into songs. In the evening, hundreds of lights could be seen. Toads could be heard from the ruins, and the air was fragrant with the scent of blossoms.

A number of talented painters were active in the area. I had a copy of a portrait of one of my great grandfathers made there. He had served as a second lieutenant in the 33rd infantry regiment during the German Campaign. He was a funny chap. When, in my life, I was attracted to a woman, I would see his jolly eyes twinkling in the picture and could hear him reciting the little verse found in his memoirs: "Lovely girls were created for soldiers not for clerics, that's why I chose this order, otherwise I would have become a cleric."[25] It is a wonderful thing to have an ancestor like this whom one can cite and thus exonerate oneself. Later, with my little sons, I went digging around in the old castle ruins. In the vaults we found walled-in rings, old fireplaces and cannonballs made of stone.

Occasionally, we also went to an estate, located near Laacher Lake, that belonged to a great uncle. He had travelled the world and was a very well-kept old man with a long white beard. The way I remember it, he was quite fond of me. What was truly unique was his store room. Like every person who is well-endowed with reason, he also had his eccentricities. In this room, there were shelves and shelves of all manner of everyday items, for example at least a dozen monocles. It goes without saying that all of us children were soon wearing one. We pulled terrible faces to hold them in place. Nevertheless, they kept falling out and, dangling from their long black ribbons, they were always in the way. And so, we soon put them back in their spot. Similarly, there were heaps of cigar and cigarette packages whose contents had no allure for us after we had tried them. And then there were the piles of hats and bugles, pipes and horns of all kinds. We were allowed to take some. They were a part of my life for a long time and later they became the coveted playthings of my sons. There are even some left for my grandchildren. This department store fulfilled every wish but no one had to pay.

In the entire house, there were voice pipes like on board a ship. If you blew into one, you would hear a whistle in another room. Soon

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[25] C.D. "*Schöne Mädchen sind geschaffen für Soldaten, nicht für Pfaffen; drum erwählt' ich diesen Orden, sonst wär' ich wohl Pfaff geworden*."

the house was full of children running around because we loved blowing into them. But because no one seemed to be paying any mind to our mischief, especially not the master of the house, we tired of the activity before long. At another time, my great uncle proved again to be a wise teacher. On the quiet pond in the park there was a row boat. From early in the morning until late in the evening I would row in it, putting into foreign ports and making long journeys. My every desire was met and all I needed was this boat to feel happy. At the lunch table, my great uncle wondered aloud who might like to bring a package to the post office for him. Because I had a larger expedition to the South Pole in mind for the afternoon, I did not make a point of volunteering for the job. When I got to the boat, the oars were missing. And so, out of boredom, I took the package to the post office. When I returned, a good fairy had put the oars back in the boat. It was only when I was rowing around on the pond that I understood what had happened, and this instruction stuck with me, though no stern words had been said. The old gentleman was simply a connoisseur of the art of living.

What was furthermore unique was his bathing facility, which was in a large, tiled room. You went down a few steps from a platform into a large pool. There were showers of all kinds and from every direction, with water pressure varying from a hard jet to a fine water curtain. There was a certain chair that I was especially fond of. When you sat down on it, a strong, ice-cold jet of water would come up from below and make the uninitiated jump back up in horror. If I become rich one day—of course, I will have to significantly step up my efforts to do so—I will certainly have a bathing room like this one made for me. Actually, my whole house would be built around this bathing room.

This wonderful property was later sold. Despite how valuable the land was. The soil was volcanic ash, known as *Trass*. The Romans had already dug away at it. In the early Christian period, a round catacomb had been excavated in which bones lying in niches awaited their resurrection. Once we were led down there by torchlight. We arrived, scared out of our wits, in the rotunda and were relieved when we got back up into the fresh air.

These interesting holiday interludes offset some of the unpleasant things. My skin got a little thicker over the years as well and I no longer let reproach push me into my shell so easily. I also noticed how things between my aunt and uncle could get quite spirited and came to realize that my plans for escape had been misguided. They would have passionate debates and fights about trivialities, and when their tempers began to flare, they would switch to French, so that we children would not understand. Ringing in my ears still today are my aunt's outraged words, "*Taisez-vous donc en présence des enfants.*" One time, when my uncle was out of options and unable to

end a discussion about a subject that was unpleasant to him and was furthermore unable to fend off an attack by my aunt, he reached for the water jug on the table and emptied it over her head. The discussion was indeed over at that point. We boys had watched with our eyes peeled and were then deeply satisfied. We saw how adults had the same flaws that we had. The next day when I came home from school, my little cousin was walking around with a water jug and beaming at me, saying, "let's water Mama!" The lesson had been absorbed quickly.

Our summer evenings on the spacious balcony were warm and homey. Lamps were lit on the balconies of all the neighbouring houses. You could hear the lusty laughter of the fun-loving Rhinelanders. Glasses clinked and from a certain open door the sounds of a grand piano came drifting in, something I loved to listening to.

It was at that time that I began to take piano lessons. I enjoyed it a lot and got as far as playing Christmas carols and a few Mozart sonatas. I often listened to the concerts at the health resort, and it was truly a great gift when I was allowed to go to the state opera. And this is how Wiesbaden began to feel like home. By this time, I had advanced to *Sekunda* and was a good student. I was surrounded by a good group of friends. Jauntily, we wore our black velvet hats with red-golden braiding at a slant over our ears. We became gentlemen.

> *You'll see the girls so frank and the men so free,*
> *As if from a noble line,*
> *Soon you will join them, your soul aglow,*
> *And you'll think this proper and fine.*[26]

[26] T.N. A quote from "*Warnung vor dem Rhein*" (Beware of the Rhein) by Karl Joseph Simrock (1802–1876).

Above: Theophil's mother's sister, Elise Stephany Gisecke. She was married to Otto Gisecke. They had five children, four sons and a daughter.

Above: Theophil's uncle by marriage, Otto Gisecke, is seated at far right with Theophil standing at his shoulder. The four Gisecke boys are leftward.

Opposite: Theophil (upper right) with his five Gisecke first cousins, left to right, top to bottom: Wolfhard Gisecke, Helmut Gisecke, Hans Gisecke, Susa Gisecke, and Otto Wilhelm Gisecke. Of the four Gisecke brothers, three died in the First World War; only Hans survived. Hans' son, Wolfhard, survived the Second World War, but his other son, Helmut, died.

Part Two
Coming of Age and Naval Training

Chapter 4
My Gisecke Family at Osnabrück

One day my mother's sister, Elise Stephany Gisecke, announced that she would be visiting. We children awaited her with curiosity and hoped that she would bring us something. And in fact, each of us received a large bar of chocolate. When we went to pick her up at the train station and I saw her face, my heart skipped a beat. For a second, I believed it was my mother herself, so close was the resemblance. In any case, my heart went out to her and it would remain with her during the years I was with her. She was a kind, very calm and good-looking woman whose family—a husband and five children—was her whole world. Her visit was to bring with it a profound change for me. In her view, it was her responsibility to take in the child of her sister. In any case it was agreed that I would go to her family.

And so the hour of my departure from the beautiful city on the Rhine awaited me. The anticipation of my new situation pushed aside all other feelings. My memory of saying goodbye to my father was reawakened, and I remembered his last words: "*Lebe wohl, mein liebes Mäuselchen!*" ("Take care, my dear little mouse!"). At the train station in Osnabrück, which was to be my new home, I was awaited by a gaggle of cousins, four boys and one girl. What life I was now

surrounded by! With a roar we landed in my new family home, and were greeted by happy faces.

I already loved my aunt. But increasingly, I would also come to love my uncle Otto Gisecke. He was a rare character. He took profound pleasure in life, was extraordinarily considerate of those around him, had a sense of humour that never ran dry, and had remarkable artistic talent. He was a higher civil servant. Near Weissenburg, in the war in 1870, he had lost the middle and ring fingers of his right hand. With a joyful sense of self-irony, he called himself "Herr Adlerklau" (Mr. Eagle's Claw). But with his three fingers he was able to hold a dip pen and pencil, and his handwriting was clear and easy to decipher. He was dead set against any kind of cheap goods. In this household, which was not blessed with great luxury but did not suffer scarcity either, the food and drink that was served was always satisfying. In the fall, large quantities of potatoes and fuel were stored away, and ham and sausages were hung in the attic. In addition to this came considerable quantities of wine. A life that was comfortable and pleasant was thus ensured, and in this household, good cheer reigned supreme.

I can still see my uncle, this magnificent man, with a red fez on his head which he had won in a raffle, blowing on an empty wine bottle and teasing me, who had just received a new suit, with a little mocking verse:

Theodor, how handsome you are
In your new blue pants
Every girl will smile at you
Theodor, you're handsome.

What is also unforgettable is how he once had tears of laughter running down his cheeks when I told him something very innocently, without understanding the humour. My French surname had always given me plenty to think about. Because my parents died early, I hadn't learned anything more about it. I only remembered my father saying that our family was originally French. And then in Osnabrück we learned about the Maid of Orléans at school. At the supper table, I confidently explained that I now understood my family heritage: I was a "descendant of the Maid of Orléans." Henceforth I was only referred to as "the descendant" and the nickname stuck.

Recently I told this anecdote to some guests. Across from me sat an eighty-year-old countess. She was listening intently. When I got to the end of the story, everyone laughed. Sometime after the topic of conversation had long since changed, the countess looked at me sharply and said reproachfully: "But the Maid was not even married!" The laughter hardly came to an end.

The family life I experienced there was exemplary. If, in my own household later on, I was able to carry on somewhat in the spirit of

this household, I have these happy years surrounded by these parents and children to thank for it in no small way. On Sundays we made music. My aunt and her daughter would play piano four-hands on the grand piano, while two sons played violin and one played cello. The rest of us would sit very cosily together and listen.

All the boys, myself included, attended the *Gymnasium Senatorium* of this honourable town. On our way to school, we passed rows of medieval houses and the cathedral. The students and teachers alike were friendly and had wonderful school spirit. There was a very lively sports programme, which was unusual for the time. Soccer was played at a very high level, and hikes lasting several days were undertaken in which we searched for the remains of the Roman corduroy roads and for the spot where Varus fell upon his sword.[27] Already back then, the military leaders had their code of honour which made them bear the consequences if they were culpable of leading their people to annihilation. The imperial Russian general Samsonov bore the same consequence after the battle of Tannenberg.

We had a good school band and occasionally put on concerts. But what I found most important was that we had carpentry class twice a week. The carpentry shop was well-equipped and had enough tools to allow a class to really get to work. The teachers were six older master carpenters under whose instruction we gained real skills and produced high-quality joinery work. Small cabinets, bookshelves, bread boards, salad servers, picture frames and other items of everyday use were the fruits of our labours. It would be so good if this curriculum could be made universal—not only for social and pedagogical reasons, but for practical reasons as well. We had a closer bond with our teachers here than I experienced in other schools. They were our fatherly friends. Dear Muck, how often you tugged at my hair when I didn't know something. And yet, how devoted I still feel when my thoughts go back to you.

But it almost seems surprising to me that we were all under the spell of our spirited religious studies class. Everywhere I had been, in both schools and churches, the educators had been adept at passing on the teaching of the Redeemer and his great love in the most spiritually-deadening manner. Here, the opposite was the case. The person of the Saviour, the world in which He lived, the political and cultural structure of His time and its openness toward His teaching were conveyed to us with incredible liveliness. We all listened intently to these descriptions and debated about them over recess. We people of the modern age have become so spiritually poor; we long for the holy grail but do not find it and teeter back and forth

[27] C.D. Publius Quinctilius Varus was ambushed by Germanic tribes and committed suicide after losing his three legions.

between guilt and atonement, between enjoyment and infinite misery, the children of Cain, who slayed his brother.

The church we attended was very different from this school that operated along modern principles. It was the Lutheran church in which I was confirmed. Perhaps a better place would have been a reformed church, where we children of Calvin actually belong. The first thing that happened was that the minister impressed upon me that I should give up my piano lessons because they did not accord with the seriousness of my confirmation year. This suited me quite well. I had been taking lessons from the organist in the same church, who, while he was an outstanding musician, was a bad teacher. The focus of each lesson was the position of the fingers and hands. Instead of satisfying the music-hungry soul of his student, he would hit me on the fingers with his ruler, to the point where I could hear the angels sing. And so I was not averse to giving up the lessons, but unfortunately I did not find my way back to music later on. It was only as a forty-year-old, after the First World War had been lost and I had some time to spare, that I began taking lessons again. But in the end, I was not able to go further with it as I needed to focus on moving along in life and in my career, which took up all my energy.

But the spiritually-deadening confirmation lessons assumed a unique character because the minister took it upon himself to contrive his own pronunciation of our language, which in itself is quite pleasing to the ears. He stretched out all the final syllables. It seemed as if every third word of his was "Beware of liars and sorcerers," which he pronounced, approximately, as "li-airs and sorcer-airs."[28] In addition to the repellent effect of the sound, we were also plummeted into a complete lack of understanding of the meaning of these profound words. Still today I do not understand what this shepherd of the soul meant by it.

For confirmation, we had to walk in pairs through the large and venerable church, always a girl next to a boy. Because I was the tallest, I headed up the line of confirmands with a young "lady". I was feeling a profound sense of earnestness, and my soul was opening up in anticipation of the sacraments I was about to receive when suddenly I heard, "Beware of li-airs and sorcer-airs," coming from the careless pastor. The absurdity of these words hit me and I broke into laughter. I immediately felt ashamed and recoiled as I felt the reproachful stares of the churchgoers all around me. In their eyes I was just another Godless, worthless youth. So easily older people sit on their high horses and are patronizing to youth, who are so hungry to pursue ideals and be understood. One should trust young people more, and above all lead by example. Sitting up on our high horse is a pose that does not befit us.

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[28] T.N. "*Lügenär und Zauberär*".

My ceremonial feelings had left me. All that was left was a formality. I would only take the sacraments again at the confirmation of my sons, feeling endless emotional distress. The sacrifice of their lives already loomed on the horizon, and I was begging God for forgiveness and mercy.

The move to Osnabrück also brought Grandmother Auguste back into my life, from whom I had been separated when I left our estate. Being reunited was a great pleasure for both of us. She always pampered and spoiled me, the orphan. For that reason, I often visited her. She lived in a nice little apartment occupying a whole floor on Schlagvorderstrasse. I would find her sitting in her wing chair by the window with her glasses on her nose, ensconced in a newspaper. She read it front to back, practically learning everything by heart, familiar with every person of note, and could explain the exact relations between the many princely families who were still ruling at the time. But above all, she knew the stock market. Although the fortune she owned, which was not inconsiderable, she held in bonds whose market price was almost stable, she had the excitement of a real stockbroker, giving herself chills thinking about unimaginable losses on the stock market and going on long imaginary journeys to vistas of unimaginable capital gains. She was therefore a very engaging conversation partner.

While she prepared things in the kitchen, I was allowed to take a look around. Ancestors peered out from pictures hanging on the walls. There was the old Herr von Voss and Herr von Möller, both wearing wigs and colourful coats, cornflower blue and pearl grey. And there was my great grandfather, smiling with a twinkle in his eye as Lieutenant of the 33rd infantry regiment. And there were pictures of a great uncle named Richter, who had participated in the war in Spain under Napoleon. All of these were oil paintings with quite a bit of artistic appeal. There was a group of Spanish prisoners, each dragging a ball and chain and spurred onward by French dragoons on horseback, horsetails waving on their helmets. In addition to these there were interesting bucolic and urban scenes from Spain. My grandmother knew the names, relations and life stories of all the persons portrayed in the pictures and she rattled this all off to me. What a sin that I did not commit all of this to paper—it would have added some interest to these pages. She certainly would have told me about my great-grandfather von Steuben and also the mysterious Fricourt, whence our ancestors emigrated, while von Steuben went to America. Now all of this is lost and gone forever. Every family should at least give a brief account of their misdeeds, to make sure that the descendants will repeat them, and with gusto.

And then there were my grandmother's display cases, which were full of fascinating things, mostly miniatures. What has remained in my memory are porcelain figurines representing a seated Chinese

man with a braid. The heads moved. If you flicked one with your finger, it began to rock, forwards, backwards, forwards and never seemed to come to rest. Then there were cute little clocks, which all worked, ticking and making music with delicate voices whenever another hour had disappeared into eternity.

And then Grandmother would call: "Time for coffee." I could smell it already; it was heavily sweetened, with rich cream mixed in as well. She served the most heavenly baked goods from the baker Lüer, whom we loved because of his excellent Christmas *stollen*. But this was not the full extent of the pleasures. Although she had no worries, my good grandmother did have liqueur. At regular intervals, the postman would bring carefully built packing cases containing bottles of Malaga, sherry, port and muscatel. Other little boxes contained the most wonderful Westphalian hams and sausages. After coffee, we ate buttered buns lavishly topped with the contents of the goodies packages and complemented by glasses of fizzing wine which Grandmother poured. Grandmother would be in high spirits, raise her glass to say cheers and would likely also hum a little ditty from her childhood: "*Jaja, in Lindenau, da ist der Himmel blau*" ("Yes yes, in Lindenau, that's where the sky is blue").

In her recollections, the giant of her childhood, Napoleon I, loomed large. She was able to say a few things about him. After all, her hometown of Erfurt had seen and housed the harried man often. When, in later years, I read Heinrich Heine's "*Tambour le Grand*,"[29] I suddenly remembered Grandmother's stories, could hear her voice and feel the respect that she had instilled in me whenever she said the name of this great European.

Seeing X-ray photographs for the first time was an utterly tremendous surprise, presumably not only for Grandmother and me. We first talked about it excitedly and felt that it must be hocus pocus that one could make visible the skeleton of a hand of a living person. You have to remember that, not so long before, electric door bells had been anything but common. At the casino in Osnabrück, my uncle, ever the joker, told a newcomer who wanted to order something that he should pull hard on the electric bell pull which hung down from the petroleum lamp in the middle of the table. The petroleum lamp came down and, henceforth, the Arthurian knights at the casino would talk with great satisfaction about my uncle's brilliant achievement.

Several years later, these petroleum lamps were converted to gas lamps. A gas mantle which had to be hung in the lamp very carefully was continually supplied with coal gas and in this way was able to glow. The air always smelled faintly of gas and was stale. If you

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[29] T.N. Pictures of Travel, "Book Le Grand" or in German *"Ideen. Das Buch Le Grand*" (1826), in which Heine describes Napoleon entering Düsseldorf.

wanted it to produce light, you opened the fuel valve on the lamp all the way and the lamp usually ignited with a loud bang. If you were too impetuous, you would end up with not only a bang but also with damage to, or complete destruction of, the gas mantle, which you would be at pains to replace.

How spoiled we are today with electric lights and radio. What a miracle it was when, after the First World War, one could put on headphones and hear music from them. One must bring to mind the sum of all these inventions—airplanes, airships, sound-film theatres, the splitting of the atom, to name just a few—which we, poor we living in this day and age, have experienced—to find an excuse and a justification for the fact that we are still beset by the problems they have created. We have become the servants of technology instead of making it our servant. One should speak from the pulpit about the wonders of this technology, of atomic science, for example, in which God reveals Himself just as He does in the Bible, where He presents us with conundrums, allows us to understand His secrets only very slowly and commands reverence. But as soon as we show ourselves to be lacking in this regard, He batters us with our own inventions. You shall have no other gods before me. A modern clergyman therefore must also be a scientist. If he then conveys some of his knowledge, he would make us shiver with reverence, understanding that God has permitted us once more to uncover some of His secrets. Speaking from the pulpit in this way would doubtlessly find resonance. The soul-searching and reformation of the individual after such a church service would also be the best defence against stale Bolshevism. The belief in the masses would thereby necessarily be destroyed.

Around this time in Osnabrück I also had my first dance classes. Grouped by age, the "society" children were rounded up. I no longer have any memory of my male partners, though I certainly do of the female ones, daughters of officers and civil servants. My cheeks becoming rosy, I followed Erna and was delighted when she greeted me. We danced the Tyrolienne, Rhineland dances, polkas, waltzes and—the most modern—an English dance called "Sir Roger." There was a lot of hopping and it was very warm, and after overcoming our initial shyness, we were very happy. When an official ended the class with many small bouquets and ribbons, all of us felt a bit doleful.

Shortly after this, when my uncle was transferred to a high office, the *Oberbergamt*[30] in Saarbrücken, and I entered Unter-Prima,[31] a new phase of my life began: we moved to Saarbrücken. My uncle bought a spacious new house with a nice, big back yard. Grandmother moved in with us and occupied several rooms of her own.

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[30] T.N. Office of Mining.

[31] T.N. Grade 12 (his penultimate year at the Gymnasium).

While, in Osnabrück I had shared a room with a potbelly stove with my oldest cousin, in which we studied, sweated, did fretwork projects and sang commercium[32] songs, now we boys all shared a room with an adjoining bedroom. It was very large, with a wide glass façade. Looking out, we saw the nursery with its plants—a lovely, deep view obstructed by nothing. In the distance was the Halberg mountain with its castle and below the large iron and steels works whose fires reddened the night sky. An uhlans (cavalry) regiment, a dragoon regiment, a field artillery regiment, and an infantry regiment were stationed in the joined cities of St. Johann and Saarbrücken, which were located on the two banks of the Saar and connected by various bridges. It was exciting when, on January 27, the birthday celebrations were held for the emperor, bringing to life all the splendour of these proud regiments. Hearing the fanfares and seeing the colourful and magnificent uniforms made our boyish hearts beat faster. This was before the time of field-grey uniforms.

We often went on hikes in the Spicheren hills, which were known for their role in 1870.[33] There, the graves of the Prussian general von François and his brave men were still tended to. We would gaze down at the parade grounds where the cavalry practiced attacking with their lances couched. These are images we can hardly imagine today. Technological warfare has extinguished all of it with one stroke of a giant's hand. During the chivalrous age, honour was still extended to the fallen and defeated enemy. In the Valley of Honour, the graves of friend and foe alike lay side by side and were carefully tended to and adorned with flowers. Death had made them all the same and all were heroes.

The Gymnasium in Saarbrücken was significantly soberer than my beloved Gymnasium Senatorium. The expectations were very high and in the beginning I really had to put my nose to the grindstone. But soon I had a firm grip on the reins and was a good student. I even did some tutoring and thus earned my first money. My student later went to the navy, like I did, and became a submarine captain and later the director of a large shipping company on the Danube. We met again when we were grown men. As fate would have it, he died shortly after, immediately before our collapse, and I was able to pay him my last respects far away from his home.

Our teachers remained impersonal and stuck to the material. The only exception was the Greek teacher. He was a rigorous scholar but also a natural actor. He let this shine through in his sartorial

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[32] C.D. A commercium is an academic feast at universities in many European countries. Songs, collected in commercium books, are a significant part of the event.

[33] C.D. The Battle of Spicheren in the Franco-Prussian war was the second of three critical defeats for France.

choices. In summer and winter alike, he donned a noticeably large and unusually wide-brimmed hat, and as soon as it got cooler out, he wore a Havelock cloak featuring a long pelerine. In this way, his sails were buffeted by every wind as he walked and he had the appearance of a flag. He put a great deal of effort into familiarizing us with Homer's *Iliad*. His lectures affected us much as an exciting motion picture would today, as he boomed with eyes aglow: Goddess, sing me the anger of Achilles, Peleus' son, that fatal anger that brought sorrow to thousands of Achaeans and threw many valiant souls down to Hades, throwing their bodies to the dogs and vultures.

Still today I have at my command whole passages of the *Iliad* in the original tongue. It was the same thing with Horace. I was attracted to the sarcasm, the parody of human weakness, especially his mockery of political adventurists. I can thus say that my humanist education has had a lasting effect on me, and I am thankful for it.

But it was the student club known as Rhenania that added a boyish and cheerful element to this crucial time in my life. It was banned. And thank goodness for that, because it otherwise would not have been as popular. The secrecy and the danger are what gave it its special appeal. Every true boy was a member. We held our commercia on Saturday afternoons. Certainly, we drank beer and some of us smoked. But in the joyful atmosphere and in rich, blossoming and life-loving Saarland we would have done these things anyway. We were held in check by the code of conduct and the frequently-invoked code of honour, and never did indecent or untoward behaviour or attitudes arise. Instead, it was here that I learned all of the many wonderful German *lieder* and commercium songs that I would sing throughout my life, at one point accompanying myself on the lute. Unfortunately, my sons and their generation were deprived of these songs, and they are all the poorer for it.

Here again I myself, an older person, must lament how the adults behaved toward the youth. Instead of digging in their heels and forbidding things, something that, as all teachers knew, was never heeded and only put the youth in a position of opposition to their teachers and other adults, it would have obviously been right if the teachers had taken the lead, been joyful and cheerful with them and had taken them on hikes and celebrated with them, opening their hearts. Nothing is easier to win over than the hearts of young people. Those at the pulpits and lecterns will have to make a tremendous effort if they want to avoid losing their position at the helm, and if they want to ensure that false leaders and idols do not, to the great detriment of all, take over.

Lively friendships developed in this club, and this also led to broader social connections. As fate would have it, I found entry into the large family of a notable heavy industrialist. Later, life would draw our two families together time and again, to the point that even

our children crossed paths in the wider world. A son-in-law of this family was Commanding Officer of the *Karlsruhe* during the First World War. This cruiser had, just like the *Emden*, engaged in cruiser warfare with great courage and therefore had entered the honour roll of our navy with her deeds. In the middle of her successes, the ship was exploded by one of her own torpedoes, and the commanding officer and some of his crew went down. The rest of the crew were able to save themselves, including my friend, who later became an admiral and answered to the wonderful first name of Kreuzwendedich.[34]

We say, "It's a small world," when we unexpectedly run into people we know out there. But I have to disagree because I know from seeing it myself just how big the world is and how much room there is for the human race to live happily and comfortably, if only people would be selfless enough not to begrudge their dear neighbours the butter on their bread.

The young Emperor Wilhelm II was at the helm of the state in stormy weather. The first Naval Laws[35] were passed at that time. We Germans remembered the times of the Hanseatic League, when we maintained the Steelyard in London and large trading posts in Bergen. There was a lively outpouring of pro-navy propaganda. With Grandmother, I contemplated which profession I should pursue. My uncle made a case for a career in law; ideally, I would become a *Landrat*, an administrative head of a district. My aunt in Wiesbaden also advised me to study law so that I could later join the foreign service. I can still hear her voice: "Theophil, dear, you were born to be a diplomat."

Grandmother merely gave expression to her grief over my having to leave her care. She found it very difficult, and her cheerfulness ran dry. For hours she would sit in the bay window with idle hands, waiting for me to return from school. She had lost her energy. One day she suffered a stroke and came to lie against the hot stove. She had burns before she could be picked up. I felt distinctly how fate was once more claiming from me that to which my heartstrings were attached. Four weeks after I had bid her a sorrowful goodbye, she was gone. Then I received my call-up papers for the navy, to which I had applied as a naval officer candidate. From now on I would be setting my own course. I was going to become a naval officer.

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[34] C.D. Kurt Gotthelf Kreuzwendedich von dem Borne (1885-1946).

[35] T.N. These acts committed Germany to building up a navy capable of competing with the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom.

SMS Stosch*, the the Imperial German Navy (*Kaiserliche Marine*) sailing ship on which Theophil was an officer in training in 1899-1900. He sailed to the Far East on the* Stosch *in 1901 and returned from there in 1903 on the heavy cruiser* SMS Hansa, a much more modern ship*. Source of photo: Wikipedia.*

Chapter 5
Naval Training

At the train station in Kiel, where I had to report for duty in early April, we were met by the boatswain's mates who took us to the old naval warrant officers' school on Muhliusstrasse, an old building. The toilets in the yard were without running water, which was not yet available to anyone in the city. Instead, collection vehicles came by every day, exchanging the used buckets for freshly cleaned ones. Because of this, the city was derisively known as "Bucket City."

We were bunked about twelve to a room. The duvets on the bunk beds had covers with a blue and white checked pattern. Camaraderie developed from the very first day. And the food was excellent. For our first breakfast we received as much bread and as many buns as we wanted along with plenty of butter and jam. At 10 am, bouillon and open sandwiches were served, and at lunchtime, a rich and hearty kind of bread. In the afternoon and evening there was similar wonderful food. We were in infantry training camp from morning to night, and thus our hunger was insatiable. After the long years in school with not enough exercise, we were now swelling up like a yeasty dough.

Soon we also had duties on the training ship. The view of the harbour to which they led us was overwhelming to me. There lay berthed the four armoured naval vessels of the *Brandenburg* class, in front of them the older ships of the *Baden* class, the so-called flatirons, and the eight coastal defense ships of the *Heimdall* class. Torpedo boats were stationed at the Blücher bridge; now and then, a siren wailed. And farther out in the Wiker bay were the four great sailing ships—*Charlotte, Stosch, Moltke, and Gneisenau*—which were to be our home for the whole year. We sailed to them on the cutters, and when I looked up from water level at the great masts of these barques, I felt uneasy. Rowing the heavy ship's boats was very strenuous at first. Our hands were covered in blisters, and there was so little space that we always bumped into the back of the man in front of us with our knuckles, rubbing them raw.

After infantry training came inspection and swearing in. Our parade step was unsatisfactory, but otherwise everything was in order. We were very ambitious and were proud of the recognition. For the swearing in, we marched in long columns, now naval cadets for the first time, wearing short, tailless jackets with open necklines and stiff white dress shirts. The jacket featured many gilt buttons, and on the side was the small gilt dagger, which hung down to knee height on a blue woolen cord. It took practice to ensure that it did not go

between your legs while walking. We also wore white suede gloves and thus were dressed in a very striking though impractical manner, very much in an ancient naval tradition.

In the church, the 150 of us naval cadets took the oath of allegiance, repeating it back to the presiding officer with our hands raised in a three-finger salute, a rumbling of thunder coming back at us from the church's vaulted ceiling. I was in a very solemn mood. In the years to come, I would uphold these promises. For me, the oath of allegiance was a rallying cry and it was binding. And this is how it should be. Only he who has experienced it firsthand knows the inner battles that precede the decision to break the oath of allegiance, which I—may I lament to God of it once more—considered my higher duty as a participant in the events of July 20, 1944.[36] There is, incidentally, an interesting discussion of the position of the soldier vis-à-vis the ruling state power in the memoirs of the *premier valet de chamber de l'empereur*, Mr. Constant (volume III, page 250, edition of the Libraire Ladvocat of 1830).[37] He discusses the unimaginable burden with which the professional soldiers were charged due to the constant changes in the governing powers. First Louis XVI, then the revolutionary government, then Napoleon I, then the king once more, then Napoleon and finally the king once more. Each government needed the defence forces and obligated the forces to serve it. About this, it is said in the aforementioned book passage:

> *Qui ne sait que l'armée ne juge pas? Le soldat sait se battre et mourir, mais ce n'est pas lui, qui peut décider si l'homme en possession de la puissance n'en abusera pas. Ce n'est pas â [sic] lui qu'il appartient de juger quelle est l'espèce de gouvernement qui convient le mieux à son pays ; cette grande question ne doit jamais lui être soumise.*
>
> *[Who doesn't know that the army doesn't judge? A soldier knows how to fight and how to die, but it is not he who can decide whether the person holding power will not abuse it. It is not up to him to judge what kind of government is best for his country; this weighty question must never be put to him.]*

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[36] C.D. Despite referring to himself here as "a participant" in these events—the plot to kill Hitler, known as Operation Valkyrie—Theophil does not write about having any part in the plot. However, our family lore contends that he was, in fact, active in that attempt, as his close connections to the known plotters would suggest. My father and grandmother told me that he only escaped being convicted because the maid provided him with a false alibi. It may be that even at the time of writing this memoir, not long after the cessation of the war, he was still apprehensive about the potential legal ramifications of a confession.

[37] C.D. Unfortunately, the title of this volume has been lost.

It is important that we Germans remember these words today, when one is tempted to lay all the blame for our defeat on the soldiers and to malign them. The fate of the individual soldier affected does not figure here, and the soldier will come to terms with that, too. But the consequences for the future, the destabilization of trust in the state will have disastrous consequences:

I remember clearly the sermon that was given when we took our oath of allegiance. The minister told of a sergeant who lay wounded at the feet of Frederick the Great. As he screamed in pain, the king, who felt disturbed by it, said, "Die in silence, sergeant!" So the sergeant fell silent and said not a word until he had breathed his last. We young navel cadets were at the edge of our seats. We felt a holy love for our fatherland and a willingness to sacrifice. It was the same love with which our student regiment, the blossom of the German nation with the Song of Germany on their lips, would rush forward into enemy machine gun fire near Langemark; we knew that the world was restless and felt the dangers threatening our homeland.

The next day we embarked. It was overwhelming. The smell of tar and the sea hung heavy in the air. Shrill whistles were blown, setting sailors and ship's boys in mystifying motion. We experienced the terribly close quarters. Each of us was given a narrow locker and small bench locker. With incredible precision, we had to fold our gear piece by piece and make use of the tiniest spaces. But in the end, everything fit. I am grateful to the navy for many things, in particular for this training in keeping meticulous order. This love of order, the habit of putting every object back in its place so it can be found quickly even in the dark has sometimes bothered my family. But putting everything in order certainly has its advantages, and because three of our four sons later went to the naval academy, I do believe that there will be a lasting effect in this regard.

We were assigned our hammocks. Making our beds in them and lashing them down was an endless confusion. The finished hammocks were stowed inboard of the ship's side. To get them to fit, it was necessary to knead and kick them. The fight to make things fit dominated everything. One thing I found particularly oppressive, which became more disturbing the longer I served and the higher I advanced, was the fact that you were never alone. You always had to talk and to take others into account. Whenever possible, I would try to slip away and enjoy being by myself for a while.

Besides lessons in navigation, weapons training, and languages, our service was essentially focused on the practice of seamanship and on artillery duty. It was the same atmosphere on board as in the time of Nelson. We were on duty day after day in the rigging, setting and lowering the sails, reefing, tacking and jibing, changing the topmast, and changing and maintaining the standing and the running rigging, that is the rigging made of wire and of hemp rope. To do this

we needed to master splices and knots, something we had to practice relentlessly. Each of us had a rope end in our pocket, and whenever we were standing together and there was a quiet moment while we were keeping watch, we would quickly take it out and practice.

In addition, there was naval vessel training, rowing, sailing, and setting the anchor. We were worked hard and we became sinewy and hardened. Time and again we had to climb the rigging, and I found it difficult at first to go up the shrouds, climbing up to the top while leaning back. The whole great artillery battery almost gave the impression of a museum piece. On each side of the vessel, there was a row of about six guns next to each other, their muzzles projecting out from the hull. At sea, they were retracted and the hull was closed off with hatches, around which tow with suet was wedged in and then the seal was created by tightening the frames with screw clamps.

It was strictly forbidden to carry matches. If you wanted to smoke in your free time, you had to go to the glowing fuse at the battery to the fore and light up there. This was manned by a guard and was located in a very beautifully carved lighthouse in our ship whose beacon was the fuse. In the battery, immediately next to the fuse, was also a potable water tank. It was carefully sealed off and was guarded by the same watchman. If you turned around you could look through the hawsehole down in the bow and see the white spray of the sea, and could feel a sharp draft coming through from below. Drinking water was always in short supply at sea and was always rationed.

Whenever it was at all possible, we naval cadets were employed in one function or another during the day and night, and so we quickly learned how things worked on the ship and what onboard life was like. We were constantly moving at a trot; the outside world disappeared. Our world was our ship.

It was while I was in these conditions that the news of my good grandmother's death reached me. The pain was bitter; once more there was a hole in my life. In normal circumstances, I would have certainly, with time, gotten over this loss. The sea, my comrades and my ever-pressing duties prevented this. Grandmother now lies in Saarbrücken in the cemetery of the Protestant church there, next to my stand-in parents who died later, my uncle and my aunt, and their youngest son, who fell near Diksmuide.

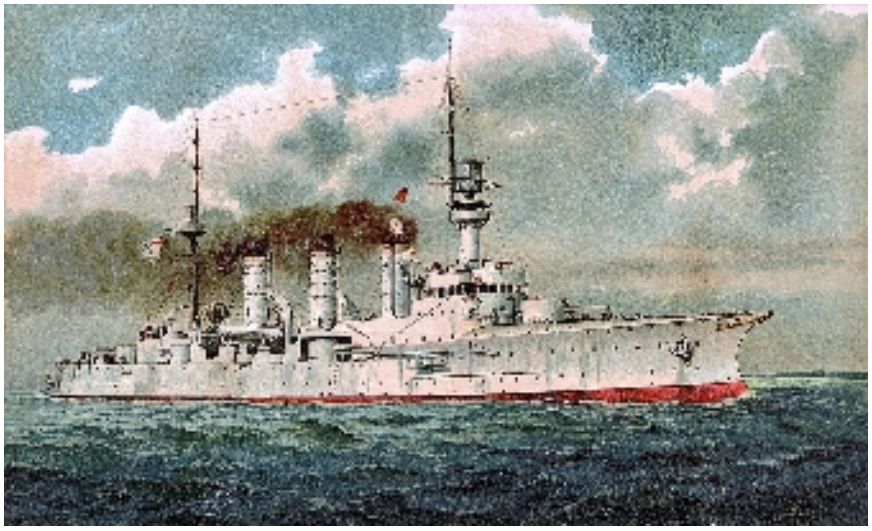
How wonderful it was in the evenings when we sat on the afterdeck, playing the concertina, singing songs, and telling funny stories. There was a guy called Waräge. He was tall and gaunt with a knife-sharp nose, his every movement jerky. He claimed he came from the Waräges in Russia, a princely family; hence the mocking name we gave him. He always told stories from the past, from the

history of this line, and the stories he told were comical, and always the same ones. Soon we knew his performances by heart. But never did he become suspicious when we kept asking to hear the stories again. This was a good joke for us and made us laugh uproariously every time. When we had to climb the rigging, he always found himself in difficulties and stepped on other people's fingers.

Another man was in charge of a small pool of money to which we contributed, which gave us cigarettes and whisky. He was enjoying some perks to this job, but his humorous apologies always appeased us and we let him get away with taking a little for himself. His life would be in ruins before long. He was dismissed when he was only a lieutenant. During the war I saw him again at the Zeebrücke jetty. He had found accommodation next to the canteen, and just in the short time I visited, he had several glasses of beer handed to him through a sliding window. Behind his couch I found a loaded infantry gun with the safety catch on. When I asked what the story was, he replied that after having been twice demoted from officer to common soldier, he had worked his way back up to officer with this gun during dangerous patrols, because he was able to spot shoot from a great distance. Now he was a lieutenant again, but he didn't know how long the splendour would last. He had gotten himself an apartment in Blankenberghe and in Ostende, as well as a motorcycle. Because he had girlfriends in both places, he zoomed back and forth during his spare time and visited them. But the military police were already on his case, he said, and going after him. For that reason, he needed the gun, to work his way up again, in case things went wrong. He was on such a path of destruction that there was nothing anyone could do to help him. And he had been one of the bravest. During a night operation against English-Dutch trade, one of our boats had come alongside a darkened ship. Despite the bad weather, our sharpshooter jumped over to the trade ship with his gun. The ship was brought in. The front could be supplied all the way down to Verdun, which made the navy very popular.

In this environment and in this company, there arose the best possible spirit of cooperation and a will to achieve. In defiance of all of life's woes, we belong together. Wherever we meet, each of us is prepared to step in for the other. A noble attitude and camaraderie, as could serve as a model to others, was very much at home in the navy. It was here that we became soldiers, comrades—for life and for death, for peace and for war.

Chapter 6
Life at Sea



SMS Hansa*, the German warship on which Theophil returned from the Far East in 1903. She was a protected cruiser, 362-feet long and built of Krupp steel, one of five ships of the Victoria Louise class. Source of photo: Wikipedia.*

This environment became my home. It has already been more than fifty years since then. A flood of memories fills this timespan—life was so colourful—and now that I am daring to put the memories to paper, it almost seems that this is an undertaking too large to be accomplished. Coming from everywhere, looking at me, are faces—friendly, hostile, laughing, grieving, white, red, yellow and black. Most of them have already made the passage in Charon's barque. They wave and call out, "Don't forget me!" The man who was at my side steps forward. We were also side by side at night. Our hammocks hung on neighbouring hooks. When the boat yawed, he bumped into me or I into him. But we slept soundly.

Hammocks make excellent beds. And it sure is great fun to loosen the lashings that hold them, making the sleeper slide down onto the deck, to great laughter. They can easily be kept clean. But in the tropics they are full of sweat. The battery door, next to which we slept, could be kept ajar and aired out by means of a chain. The chain ran inboard going through a small hole. When the ship was laid over in bad weather, a jet of water as thick as a finger rushed through this hole and into our hammocks. But this didn't disturb us much.

Here I would like to remember our mathematics teacher. He was one of a kind. One time he didn't close his porthole in time, and a whole ocean came rushing into his room. Panicking, he called for his boy whose name, of all names, was Theobald: "Theobald, Theobald, shut the port hole; I can't get a handle on this water!" And then: "Theobald hang up the blankets and mattresses in the shrouds. They stink!" During class, he always left out equations, meaning that he skipped a deduction step, "solely to save time," as he put it. One day the newspaper announced that his wife had had twins. The oldest in our class congratulated him on everyone's behalf with flowers and with the comment, "We know why it's twins, dear Professor—solely to save time!"

During this initial phase of our training, our first contact with the emperor took place. As I write these words, I am again completely filled with the reverence and devotion that I felt back then. For us, the emperor embodied the fatherland; we had pledged "a physical oath" to him and were utterly prepared to sacrifice everything for him. He sailed with his launch "*Hulda*" past all the ships, which greeted him with the 21-gun salute. This salute thundered throughout the whole harbour and it took a long time for the cloud of gunpowder to dissipate. There was also a parade. The teams manning the rail waved their hats three times on command and yelled "Hurrah!" Naval cadets and ship's boys moved into position on the yards, meaning that we had to walk out like tightrope walkers on the thick yards and then stand at attention until the emperor's boat had passed, and then came the command to come back in. As protection from falling from the slippery yardarms, jackstays were stretched along the yards but the safety they offered was limited.

In general, working up in the rigging is not without its dangers. Once, later on, in the tropics, I began to feel unwell while up near the topmast. This was after we had been working the sails for two hours, chasing up and down. I was hanging on tight to the stays and gripping my own jacket. Comrades came to my aid. When the attack was more or less over, I was carefully led down to the deck and laid in the shade. It seems I was close to having sunstroke.

During parades, we would stand up on the yards in our parade uniforms—in short, tailless jackets, stiff white dress shirts, with a golden dagger. We could then get an impression—albeit a brief one—of the emperor in his white hat, white trousers, blue tunic with many stripes and golden aiguillettes, as he sailed by, greeting us happily. He was the architect and creator of our navy and he always drilled a Hanseatic saying into us: *Navigare necesse est, vivere non!* [It is necessary to sail, not to live!] We always felt his strong hand, which was building the navy. We were proud of our navy, our fatherland, and our emperor. And so we gradually became true warship sailors; we knew the rigging, the braces, the yardarms, the halyards,

the stays, the bowlines and jolly boats. We knew how to tie reef knots and could change topmasts and sails. We knew our artillery, we knew the watchkeeping routines and even signalling duty to some extent. The signal book was wrapped up in thick linen and had brass detailing, something like a commercium book, so that it would stay dry. It was also bound with thick lead plates to make sure that it would not float.

Now, after the Education Officer did his Ready for Sea inspection, our great voyage could begin: for us cadets, the dream of seeing and conquering the world was about to come true. Prams with black flags came alongside and filled our ammunition chambers with ammunition. These chambers can be "flooded". This can be done either by opening valves in the ship's side, allowing water to come in, or by pumping water in. We had to slave away at these pumps. Twelve men would work at each pump handle, turning it. Soon you had your tongue hanging out.

Then prams came and brought provisions, then washer women and tailors with their final deliveries and invoices, and then, finally, livestock—cattle, pigs, sheep and chickens. The large animals received lift harnesses and were hoisted up to great hurrah. Still today I can see the performance I saw so often, how a cow swayed helplessly, assuming the posture known from the Order of the Golden Fleece and, struck with the fear of death, emptied its bowels, so that everyone had to quickly step "out of the rain." The animal was taken to its spot on the foredeck between main mast and foremast, where it would vegetate for the next few weeks until it was eaten. Like people, the livestock would get sea sick, and then the meat didn't taste very good. It had a whitish colour. A sty was made for the pigs under the anchor capstan.

To raise the anchor, the bars were stuck in the barrel and a line was lashed around the outside of it in a loop. Answering to the command "Man the capstan!", we would move into this carousel and turn the capstan with all our might to raise the anchor. When the chain was long, as it was in Madeira when we were usually dealing with about a hundred metres, this was very hard work. To motivate us, the drummers and pipers would play the song: *Lampenputzer ist mein Vater am Beliner Stadttheater, Meine Mutter wäscht Manschetten für Offiziere und Kadetten*.[38] The anchor came up faster the higher it was in the water and the shorter the chain. Then you'd be half dragged across the deck and the poor pigs below us, above

[38] T.N. An older folk song, whose first lines translate as: "My father is a lamp cleaner at the Berlin City Theatre, My mother washes cuffs for officers and cadets." Theophil might have misremembered that the "officers" in the second stanza are soldiers (*Soldaten*), which makes for better rhythm in the German.

whose sties this wild chase was taking place, were given a kick here and there and they squealed loudly in unison with us. Then, when the anchor was out of the water, it was laid on the "pig's back" of the forecastle and lashed. Such a maneuver often lasted an hour and, with the sails being set at the same time, would keep the entire crew hopping. Nowadays, you hardly need any manpower anymore and you just run the capstan engine for about ten minutes.

We were woken up at six every morning. The ship's mates on watch would walk up and down the decks and yell out the mysterious words "*Reise, reise, aufs Quartier!*" This was a German corruption of the English words "Rise, rise! Up the quarter of the watch!" You can tell from this how the seafaring Englishmen had a strong influence on our navy.

Here, I may commemorate another exclamation that was heard time and again: "*Warschau!*" You would hear this if you were in someone's way, if someone was cleaning the deck and was about to pour a bucket of water over your feet, or if a belaying pin or a marlinspike was dropped from the rigging and might land on your head. It's a Dutch word and means nothing more than "Watch out!"

To wake us up, the drummers and pipers played *"Pflücket die Rosen, ehe sie verblühen*" ("Pick the roses before they wilt.") This song made a lot of sense for young seamen who had a girl in every town. But it sounded cruel when you had only been able to get to sleep at 4 am because you had the middle watch. Then deck washing duty began right away. All of the pumps would spew water, and if you were not fast enough, you would have wet feet as you lashed your hammock and put on your garb. This consisted of a sweaty flannel shirt and "white" clothes, that is jacket and trousers made of strong canvas which were generally covered in grease stains from the rigging, and tar stains too. In addition, there were undergarments, coarse socks and shoes, and a "Scottish side cap." The caps were originally dark blue, with fluttering ribbons that would rip off after only a short while, and always reminded me of sparrows with their tailfeathers plucked out.

In contrast to the food that was served during our training on land, the onboard fare was downright rotten. Our hunger was never satisfied. The steward made quite the business for himself at our expense. We hated our steward because if we wanted to satisfy our hunger, we had to buy his expensive chocolate and cookies, which drained our meagre salary. At sea we received only hardtack with our hot morning coffee, and it had likely enjoyed several journeys around the globe already. In the pores of the hardtack were maggots that we had to bang out with a smack of the hand. The stuff was so hard that we had to smash it and dip it in the coffee to soften it. On the side, there was butter which, in the hotter climes, had melted and featured drowned cockroaches floating in it, which proliferated

by the thousands. And there were just as many rats, which ran squeaking back and forth through the rudder housing. Once, when I was about to put my big toe in my shoe, a rat jumped out at me. But you get used to anything. We had a great sense of humour about everything, were full of pranks, and simply made our peace with the way things were. The only problem was that we did not gain any weight. By the end of my first year on the training ship, I was several kilos lighter than at the beginning. For a young soldier of eighteen years, this was certainly unusual. But, as mentioned, no harm had come to us psychologically. We engaged with our work enthusiastically, and we felt and knew that we were approaching years of extraordinary decisions and that we would have to be prepared to make extraordinary efforts. We were not mollycoddled, and through the great demands, the severe treatment, and the raw living conditions, we became hard ourselves. There can be no other training for German naval cadets because nothing else could produce the men that we need. Of the 150 comrades with whom I began, today approximately forty are still alive. But all who have gone to Valhalla did credit to the navy. Up there with their jugs of mead, they are certainly as cheerful as they were back then, and they stand before me: true men, seafarers, and patriots.

Our youthful cheer became especially obvious during shore leave. As long as watchkeeping wasn't chaining us to the ship, we were allowed to go on shore on Saturdays and Sundays in the afternoon. While the streets were filled with mariners and hence one saw many of one's own, there was also plenty of distraction and good pubs and restaurants. "Tante Flamme" had excellent pastries and confectionaries. The amount of whipped cream, cream pies and chocolates that we put away there was legendary. And afterwards we would go to "Holsts Hotel" and have a beef steak with a fried egg and everything else that went with it. The business people in the naval garrison towns earned handsomely. They were the ones who made money, not us poor regular soldiers with our meagre pay.

One evening we went to a variety show at a music hall. Performing for a very jubilant crowd, which consisted mainly of jovial sailors, was a person who imitated animals. He would moo like a cow, bark or say cock-a-doodle-doo—over and over again. At some point the person sitting next to us, a cheerful lieutenant, stood up and yelled at the stage, "Now do a canned sardine!" A perplexed silence followed. Then, from the stage came, "You are an uncouth man! I am going to lend you an etiquette manual for half an hour so you may learn how to behave around gentlemen!" The lieutenant replied, "No, my good man, don't do that! You can't afford to be without your etiquette manual for that long." The room roared with laughter; the lieutenant had won the round. Our tanks filled, we barely reached

the last regular boat by midnight. We got in our hammocks, our eyelids finally heavy enough.

Here I have to commemorate our court jester, the ship's monkey Ombre. The crowning moment of his shenanigans was as follows: we were having a lesson with the gun ports open. It was hot. Outside, the opal-blue sea was rushing by. We were staring out and dreaming of the wonderful things that we were going to experience, following in the footsteps of Columbus. An old navy joke came to me: after landing, Columbus asks the natives if they are Indians? "Yeah," they said in Indian, "and are yu Clumbumbus?" When he answered yes, the Indians, completely content, said, "Well, we've been discovered." Suddenly I was stirred out of my reverie. Ombre had climbed through a port into our mess, had grabbed an inkpot and gone up over the deadeyes and chain-wale all the way to the mizzen mast: an inkpot up there above the snow-white wooden upper deck of an imperial sailing ship, from which one could eat, if necessary, as if from a wooden plate. All cadets were immediately sent up to hunt for the monkey on all three masts. This was a marvellous change of pace. But Ombre, holding the inkpot tight against his chest, cannot be caught. In great distress, he climbs down from the rigging and disappears through the porthole into the first officer's chamber. That's where he empties the inkpot. There were no sections in the strict and severe disciplinary regulations to cover these actions.

At that time there was still corporal punishment for ship's boys who had not yet taken the oath. But it was used very rarely. Our first officer, choleric by nature, instilled incredible respect in us, but he was actually a softie. Just like us younger ones, he was not fond of corporal punishment. Yet it had to be doled out if one of the boys stole from another. The whole crew would form a square on the afterdeck. In the middle was a bench locker, over which the "convict" was thrown. His hands and feet were held by comrades. The sergeant would approach holding the leather whip and would dole out the number of strokes that had been determined. You could see the marks left by the strokes on the light-coloured trousers which were taut over the rear end of the delinquent. The victim's screams were dreadful to us all and a wave of pity reached the one who was being beaten. Nevertheless, the educational effect was remarkable. This medieval procedure has long been abolished in the navy. We now live in a more modern time. We now make use of gas, machine guns, of concentration, hunger and extermination camps, or we destroy millions of unwanted citizens after combat actions have been concluded by taking from them the possibility of practicing their professions and by closing their bank accounts, thus bringing about the psychological and physical downfall of entire families. Dear God, save us from these evils and finally bring the world peace!

If someone were to ask me what happened to my soul during this time, I would have a difficult time answering. The transition from landlubber to seaman was so tumultuous that it was almost as if I were numbed. My burning homesickness quickly faded away, and in its place came a general devil-may-care attitude. Everything was all the same to me. We trotted around, tumbled, rowed, climbed and sometimes fell into the drink. But my comrades, all in the same condition, helped me to get over this deadlock. We became proud of our achievements and our marvellous profession. And in this spirit, the sea became a true home to which I became increasingly bound. These ties will only cease when I am dead and gone. I am writing these lines while landlocked at the heart of our continent. Outside right now, armed Russian soldiers are roving about. Shots are ringing out and women are shrieking. Yesterday they murdered a young girl in the neighbour's house. I need to concentrate. And so, with as much willpower as I can muster, I think of the sea, and now I feel its bracing salt air and see the horizon, and am consumed in my longing for it. Will my wish ever come true, to once more have her carry me far away and then conclude my existence in a little house on the beach? My soul—and this is my answer—was conquered by the sea and will never be returned.

Part Three

Seeing the World and the Dawn of a New Century

Chapter 7

England

Finally, the chain was unshackled from the mooring buoy's ring in Wiker Bay and the wire rope reeved, the last thing that still tied us to our homeland. Then the quarter watch hauled this in too, and the sails were set. They caught the wind, and our ship began to move. Without a doubt, I must have later navigated the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Kanal[39] we were now entering many hundreds of times; it leads through the beautiful meadows of the Holstein countryside. It was here that I always felt a strong sense of home, home that bid you farewell, people waving from the shore, home that greeted you when you returned from a long voyage at sea, home that laughed and cried and rang its bells when you passed through on a tour of duty, still alive and fighting, but now lacking some dear comrades who gave their lives for this precious homeland. My thoughts are with you. Your end came quickly; the sea is pure and blue as always and its blue grave awaits every man at every moment.

In the North Sea the yawing began. Luckily, I had my sea legs and I was always spared from sea sickness, which can be a dangerous illness. I recall one case from a voyage in the Bay of Biscay. A ship's boy kept trying to jump overboard. A comrade was tied to each of his hands, to keep him from carrying out his suicidal intentions. When we reached the next port, he was sent home because his case was hopeless. Another case was much more exciting. This was from the time when I was a torpedo boat commander. Winter maneuvers off Sassnitz and Arkona. The weather was almost always miserable. Wind and driving snow, and freezing cold. Day and night, we were dragged around in the water, more through it than on it. Waves broke over the boat. After putting into harbour late at night, we would take on more fuel and then sail again in the morning. In one of those nights, one of our fine boats ran aground. She lay high and dry off Schwinemünde. A number of frames had broken when she hit. Luckily, there was no loss of life. The commander had hoped to make it back to the harbour on the fuel that he had, but then, suddenly, there was no more steam. Towing was no longer possible

[39] T.N. Today Kiel Canal.

because the boat was already almost at the lee shore, and that's when the incident occurred. The commander did not gain any laurels, but his courage in carrying out the rescue of his crew was acknowledged.

This was the situation in which we lived for four weeks. Before we put out to sea, I was told that one of the sailors was refusing to stay on board any longer because sea sickness was killing him. I couldn't let this pass. In a short speech, I made my objections to this slackness. All of us had to suffer the same conditions. So the sailor stayed on board. Two hours later, just as I was about to duck behind the bridge bulwark to avoid being slammed by breaking waves, I saw a shadow rushing by. Instinctively, I shifted from full speed ahead to three times full speed astern. Immediately I heard someone call: "Man overboard!" The unlucky soul who couldn't stand the seasickness preferred to drown than to endure the torture. Through a quick maneuver and the excellent work of the personnel in the engine room, the ship quickly came to a halt and the drowning man could be rescued using the hook that was normally used for picking up practice torpedoes. Still today, I can see the almost lifeless figure in the arms of his comrades, being carried across the deck. He was then transferred from the navy to a ground force unit, and years later, when we were docked somewhere, he came on board looking for me and thanked me for saving his life.

Yawing and pitching, our good ship moved westward through the North Sea, heading for the English Channel. For a long time, the arms of Heligoland's lighthouse beacon still stretched out after us, and from portside the beacons of the German and Dutch North Sea islands blinked. And then we put into port in Portsmouth. Finally, the wishes of all young seafarers were about to come true: a new world was opening up before us.

Two things made a particularly deep impression on me. We had several university students among us who were studying naval engineering. They were doing a service year with us cadets, but they wore seaman uniforms. Two of them wore glasses. Immediately, we had a gaggle of English boys around us, who were surprised to be looking at sailors with glasses: "Look at the sailors with spectacles." For the Englishman with knowledge of seafaring, it was unheard of to go to sea with poor eyesight. And the second unforgettable impression: Nelson. There lay the "*Victory*," his famous flagship. The internationally-known flag signal "England expects that every man will do his duty" was attached to a halyard, ready to be hoisted. In ancient Rome, they closed the Janus temple[40] when it was time to let the weapons decide. Here, they hoist this signal and it is meant to be a call for Great Britain, a call to the entire empire, which Nelson created. Our chests swelled when we heard that Nelson did not let a

[40] T.N. It was actually opened in times of war.

cadet named Hardy drown when he went overboard as enemies were hunting them down. Instead, he stopped the ship by heaving to and got Hardy back on board with the help of a rescue boat, all while the enemy advanced. True loyalty. And then it was in Hardy's arms that Nelson, at Trafalgar, departed and Hardy, at the wish of the dying man, kissed him on the forehead. Deep within the ship, in front of the storeroom where Nelson died, we stood overcome with feelings of respect as we read the simple wooden sign: "Here Nelson died." This was the first time that we—Germans who had grown up on land strategies—heard of Mahan's teaching of the influence of sea power on history. We began to understand how the only relevant opponent to Napoleon, master of the land, was Nelson, the embodiment of English naval power. What shape would world history have taken if Nelson had been French and Villeneuve English?

We heard about Nelson's beautiful Emily,[41] loved so dearly and passionately by the one-eyed, one-armed admiral, who occupied his last thoughts and wishes when he closed his eyes—wishes that England did not grant.[42] This is hard to grasp for our German soul, which too easily forgets the *raison d'état* as opposed to the English for whom "my country, right or wrong" always sets the bar. We disembarked from the *Victory* in a solemn state, making a promise to strive as Nelson, working for our Germany as German naval officers.

A little known but interesting fact is that Napoleon himself strove to become a naval officer. But because this officer corps was very exclusive in the time of kings, one needed to have influential patrons and an old, noble name to be accepted, and Napoleon lacked both. If he had come up against the English at sea as an admiral, this would have been a perilous situation for the English. He certainly would have been able to put together an excellent fleet, to instill it with his spirit and lead it from victory to victory.

The French flagship at Abu Qir was the large *L'Orient*. She was blown to pieces when her ammunition chamber exploded. The English officer corps had a coffin made for Nelson from the giant main mast, which he always had with him, even on his journey over land from Naples to England, via Austria and Germany. Nelson, daredevil that he was, having lost one eye and one arm in action, likely always knew that his life would come to a heroic conclusion, the kind that was denied his great opponent Napoleon. It was only years after the latter's death that his fatherland of France—"*ma patrie, que j'ai tant aimé*"—could pay him his last respects in a fashion that was truly

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[41] T.N. Her actual name was Emma Hamilton.

[42] C.D. Nelson's last request was that his lover, Emma Hamilton, should be taken care of (since they were not married) but his request was ignored. Hamilton was abandoned by their friends after Nelson's death and she and his daughter ended up in a debtor's prison.

due to him. But how was the defeated and sick lion treated by the commander of the "*Bellerophon*"?[43] And this is not to mention Napoleon's final years on St. Helena. Heinrich Heine, writing about this, held a mirror up to the English nation. In his "*Tambour le Grand*" we read his call to the French never to forget and never to forgive the treatment of Napoleon. But we need to move on. We all need to learn to forgive. As Emperor Wilhelm II said: "People of Europe, unite and protect your most holy rights." These words are written under an image showing the allegories of all European countries next to one another as friends: a front against the East!

During our stay in Portsmouth, we naval cadets went on an excursion to the charming Isle of Wight. We stayed in a comfortable hotel in Ventnor. Besides the defiant Needles,[44] I was impressed by the wonderful English bathroom soap. Thereafter, I always had a particular liking for Pears soap and used it as long as my foreign currencies lasted. Unfortunately, it has been a long time since then and it almost seems as if my dear fellow human beings are going to prevent me from using Pears soap ever again.

The beautiful English warships, especially the "*Terrible*" with her many funnels, had us naval cadets extraordinarily interested. The difference between them and us, their poor relatives, was plain to see. In the next fifteen years, we would work and build tirelessly to be the equal of the English fleet. And truly, the Imperial High Seas Fleet was created overnight and so the German fate is tragically similar to that of the fleet of Napoleon I. He too had to recreate the Royal French fleet that was destroyed in the revolution, hindered by the Jacobins who interfered in all affairs until he had free range as the sole leader. For Napoleon alas, there was insufficient time for this task and this was the final and tragic reason for his failure.

We slaved away day and night, and we proved ourselves in many minor skirmishes, but above all at the Skagerrak.[45] This success made quite the impact. A Canadian officer told me the following after the Second World War: one morning, when his father was walking him to school, a paperboy called, "Extra, Extra, read all about it"

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[43] T.N. *HMS Bellerophon* was a Royal Navy ship that served in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars; Napoleon surrendered to her captain in 1815.

[44] C.D. The Needles are large rock formations off The Isle of Wight. Theophil's eldest son, Werner (my father), would later be shot down near this location during the first year of WWII, but fortunately he survived.

[45] C.D. Here Theophil is referring to what is more commonly known as the Battle of Jutland (1916) a significant battle of WWI which was considered a success by both sides—the British because they were able to contain the German fleet, and the Germans because they killed over 6,000 British sailors and sank many of their ships. Theophil discusses this battle further in Chapters 18 and 21.

and there was news of the German success in the Battle of the Skagerrak. The father bought a whole pile of the newspapers, and allowed his son to play hookey and sell the papers, which went like hotcakes. This was how the man had earned money for the first time.

But what was all our technical knowledge given the complete failure of leadership with respect to the foreign policy of the empire? The question is always the same for us: East or West? Going back and forth between Scylla and Charybdis is worth nothing; we will just be swallowed up. This is now the case, except that we are lying like bricks in the belly of the monsters that swallowed us. Should Hitler's prophecy as he told it in conversation with Rauschnigg[46] come true, and this is the end for everyone?

[46] T.N. Hermann Rauschning, a conservative reactionary who renounced the Nazi party; chiefly known for his *Gespräche mit Hitler* (*Conversations with Hitler*, American title: *Voice of Destruction*, British title: *Hitler Speaks*).

Chapter 8
Africa and the West Indies

Southward! We continued on a general southward course from Portsmouth. Behind us was Ouessant[47] with its lighthouse beacon. It was getting warmer by the day. Our daily routines were setting the sails, reefing the sails, bracing up the yards, bracing in the yards, getting the rescue boat ready, doing combat and signal duty. The sea turned a cobalt blue. Dolphins were our *compagnons du voyage*. During middle watch, I smelled the first smells of the Spanish coast; I was learning to smell land for the first time. Then we put into port in Vigo. Dear God, what incredible sunshine and heat, what unbelievable impressions. The churches rang their small and large bells all day long. Elegant Spanish officers strolled along in front of the *ayuntamiento*[48] in the afternoon. Effortlessly, we fell in step with the world around us. Beautiful ladies, beautiful horses and carriages. Old forts and everywhere the signs of old power and tradition. We were in the motherland of the empire in which the sun never set, where Charles V, a German emperor, was at home. We were drawn to Spain and its inhabitants by a sense of our shared history and past. And this sense only deepened for all of us over the years when we returned to Spain on many occasions. We appreciated and loved the chivalric and courageous Spain which indeed felt like home to us. The wine, the wonderful fish dishes, the fruit and the beautiful girls played a great role for us during the next weeks. A few names of young ladies still flutter through my mind, like Cruca Garcon and Mimi Carbonel. If I thought about it a lot more, I'm sure I could extend the repertoire, but any connoisseur will confirm that two Spanish women are enough to keep a man busy. Where are you now, you who filled our young hearts and made them beat faster? Ships that pass in the night![49]

On we went, ever southward. Past the battlefield of Trafalgar, past La Linea-Gibraltar to Tangier. We were in Africa for the first time. Tangier with its colourful, international lifestyle, Kabyles with burnooses and red leather shoes. We thought of Emperor Charles V, of his great campaign against Algeria, and of the Rifians who sold the Christians they captured as slaves. We were also given a lecture about the Prussian Prince Adalbert who received his baptism of fire nearby, in a battle against the Rifians at Tres Forcas. It was our

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[47] T.N. Theophil writes Quessant, but presumably this is Ushant (Ille d'Ouessant).
[48] T.N. City Hall.
[49] T.N. Theophil wrote this last sentence in English.

burning desire to experience this ourselves. But in these waters the time of pirates is over once and for all.

Making up for all this lack of action was a trip to Cape Spartel, the most northwestern point of Africa. There, a lighthouse stands, which is important for passage through the Strait of Gibraltar. From the height of Cape Spartel, we looked across at Gibraltar directly opposite us, which was once won for England by German troops. Back then, the regiments of the Imperial German Army wore brassards with inscriptions of special successes in past times. And so there was a brassard which bore the inscription: Gibraltar. How different would European history be if we, as in this case and in the times of Marlborough and Wellington, had held together?

We navel cadets rode to Cape Spartel on donkeys. Every donkey was led by its master and had a high-flown name like Bismarck or Emperor Wilhelm. If the riders were English, the names would become English too, and so now the donkey was Churchill. With this form of showing respect, the drivers were only hoping to wangle a higher baksheesh,[50] a word that has made its way around the world and achieved international validity. The poor donkeys were poked and spurred on using the points of agave leaves, which was ghastly. And so we constantly found ourselves defending our animals against the insensitive drivers.

After Tangier, we moved on to the island of Madeira and the Canary Islands in quick succession. Madeira: tuberculosis patients, mountain peaks and sled rides from the top of the mountain over the slippery cobblestones down toward the valley at high speed. Our sled was unfortunate insofar as it ran into the hindlegs of an unsuspecting mule, who sat down in our midst and stayed there until we could brake and it could disembark. Both the mule and us cadets came away with a few contusions, but they soon healed, or at least we know that ours did.

It was bitingly cold at the peak of the mountain. That's where the Rio Frio flows, whose name is telling. In one place, it formed a pond surrounded by high cliffs. Climbing on those cliffs, I slipped and tumbled into this basin, just as I was. It was cold and I found it difficult to get out. I held onto a branch until my comrades were able to fish me out. My clothes then dried over a great campfire and in the end I never even came down with the sniffles. We all stocked up on the beautiful lace mats, dresses and handkerchiefs. Later, we would break hearts with them, and when we returned home, we delighted the hearts of our even more honourable aunts. And the tuberculosis patients? They lived in lovely sanatoriums and had everything that spoiled taste could ask for except our robust health and toughness. Their wealth did not help them, one could hear the Grim Reaper

[50] C.D. A tip or, less kindly, a bribe.

sharpening his scythe and then cutting the stalks without mercy. Plenty of money can make you happy. But to be in control of plenty of money requires a lot of knowledge and culture, and without it the effect is devastating.

As we continued on our journey, we were greeted by a white cloud above: the Pico de Tenerife. Like a dream it floated above the blue sea, and all that could be seen was the peak—below, nothing. A white castle of the Gods whose foundations remain hidden to the earthly eye that looks on from the distance. The Canary Islands: yellow and sandy and stretched out. A powerful jetty on which broke the Atlantic swells. And it was hot, so very hot! The proximity of the equator announced itself. Through our constant duty and the incessant running and rushing around, we became complete torrents. Everything about us was wet, our shirts, trousers and hair. We were so thirsty, and the little there was to drink was unhealthy. It was either bad water or thick tropical beer. And fruit. We were now made of nothing but bananas, oranges and melons. Bananas more than anything. They were shipped out by the steamship-load. There are banana ships whose interiors are set up specifically for this kind of transport. For a decade, this fruit ceased to be available in Germany because clever statesmen prevented it from being imported by waging war. Because of the war and the symptoms of scarcity, the state of German health grew worse and worse. A doctor told me recently that typhus, for example, had been unknown in his small town, but today it is endemic there. God must be shaking his head and his kind features must be full of grief. Only hatred among men.

We were very much in need of a rest; we were worn-out, dried out, and could not get enough to eat. And so we went on a two-day sojourn inland from Las Palmas, which pepped us up considerably. We stayed in a good English hotel with good provisions and a quiet atmosphere, in surroundings that were enviably beautiful. Fields, palm trees, gardens, fruit-laden trees and blooming cactuses. Not only this, but there were several tennis courts, which we kept occupied more or less all of the time.

The magnificent surf in Las Palmas made going for a dip look very alluring. Here and there, large rocks lay in the surf, making for plumes of sea spray when a wave hit them. We hadn't considered how much undertow there would be when the waves retreated. We were hardly belly-deep in the water when our legs were positively pulled out from under us. Like playthings, we were tossed about. Making every effort, we got back to shallow water, and we were happy when we were back on land. Unfortunately, we'd had no idea that the beach was strewn with sea urchins, whose spines stung us all over, especially our feet. We helped each other pull them out, but wherever we were unable to, they became pus-filled and worked

their way to the surface during the following weeks, which was painful. We cursed our ridiculous need for water and cleanliness.

And then we went westward, to Central America. Once again, foreign lands would capture our senses. The trade winds pushed us gently onwards. We came through the Sargasso Sea. Thick bunches of seaweed covered the surface of the water for as far as the eye could see. We slowly wound our way through it. A bunch of seaweed was taken aboard and put in bottles. Such a bottle is a necessity for every true sailor, along with a bottle containing a fully-rigged sailing ship and undergoing the line-crossing ceremony. During our passage through the Sargasso Sea, which lasted a number of days, we often spoke of the legendary Atlantis, which was thought to have been located here; Plato, too, had spoken of it. During the day, a wonderful blue sea lapped around our ship, with small whitecaps that pushed us onward. When we practiced clearing the ship for action, I was temporarily given a station as a sharpshooter on the mizzen fighting top. We climbed up into the rigging with the long sidearm buckled on and a heavy 71/84 gun slung around our shoulders on long straps. It was difficult climbing over the chainplates and like the others I had to clench my teeth to keep from showing any signs of weakness. But as mariners, we scoffed at going through the lubber's hole, which was for soldiers. We never used it because it would make us ridiculous in the eyes of the others, and we climbed everywhere in the rigging, even if we were carrying unwieldy things. Once we got to the top, we could enjoy relative calm. We aimed downward on occasion, at the open upper deck of the imagined enemy sailing ship, which we had gone alongside in order to board it and determine a winner in man-to-man combat. Our task was to help the attacking boarders with our sharpshooting. Every now and then we would fire a blank to show the dummies on deck with just what spirit we were following their heroic battle. But for the most part, we had a comfortable lie down up there. One of us always had to keep watch to make sure that none of our petty officers secretly came up and surprised us in our *dolce far niente*. And so we would doze calmly in the stifling heat, our dreams carrying us far away.

Sometimes another ship would pass us. This was a small sensation at the time, when there was no radiotelegraphy yet. Flag signal: "What ship?" Answer: "Irish ship and Irish crew." We essentially got to know one of the Achilles' heels of the British Empire. An Irishman will always be just that. When you are in Cape Town and you ask: "Are you British?", the answer is: "No, I am South African." What intelligence and statesmanship it must take to hold the empire together despite two world wars! Its unity is based in the understanding shared by all member states that the economic coordination and its resulting welfare is decisive for the survival and comfort of each individual. A change to this order would invite the collapse of the

entire edifice and likely also have the dissolution of society as a consequence. This danger makes England the mortal enemy of Bolshevik Russia, which is working toward the dissolution of all existing order. England under Churchill could have prevented this situation if it had made us Germans into its sword on the mainland. We Europeans, at the tomb of all the dead, at the grave of so many hopes and joys, must beat ourselves across the chest and cry out, "*mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!*" If we did, perhaps we would someday find our way to the Grail Castle.

Columbus, who in his time followed the same course that we were following now, had other concerns. He had to contend with courtly intrigues and human short-sightedness. His conviction that the earth was a sphere was deemed to be heresy. And if the earth truly was flat, one would have to reach the end of it at some point, and then one would fall off into nothingness! In many agonizing hours, he had to subdue his doubts in his own chest, and also fight the incipient rebellion of his crew of thugs who had joined his adventure and were losing their courage.[51] Overboard with Columbus, the seducer and corrupter, down to the sharks who always followed his carvels, just as they were accompanying us now. A victim for the sea and then homewards!

The nights were lovely. When I staggered on deck for the middle watch, sleepy, with clothes drenched in sweat from the heat of the stuffy mess hall where our hammocks hung, sticking to our bodies, the masts swayed evenly between the stars, the yards creaked and the many blocks were clunking in the wind. For us young mariners, this was music to our ears, played in full chords, and the gentle churning of the sea was the harmonious accompaniment. When we weren't bracing up or squaring the yards, we used the sextant to take star sights and did our first nautical calculations. Our watch officer was clever and kind. Despite being tired, we enjoyed learning under his experienced guidance. Still today, I can see the little chart room in which we pored over logarithmic tables. Between us, a circular tray that was hung from a hook swung freely to the movements of the ship, from right to left and from front to back. On the tray was the middle watch breakfast for the officer on watch: hot, heavy coffee with lots of "sea cow milk"[52] and sugar mixed in and quite the mountain of buttered bread. When our work was done, our watch officer would donate part of his meal to each of us, which we would eat with gusto. I still feel deep gratitude today when I think of this superior who now rests in Valhalla.

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[51] T.N. i.e., because they feared the Earth was indeed flat after all and they would soon fall off.

[52] T.N. One source describes the ingredients of "manatee milk" as: a lot of water, a little milk and *pimenta* (Brazilian pepper).

The hot days, the way we slept, whenever possible in a strong draft and without clothes, the poor drinking water, the tropical beer and the uncooked fruit ultimately led to an inescapable catastrophe. Dysentery befell our ship. It was devastating. Soon it was not just individual cases. The little sick rooms were overflowing. The sick were put in the battery, bedded on their hammocks which were placed on deck between the guns. There were rows of them. The whole long battery was one field hospital room in which our doctors toiled. The entire ship reeked of disinfectant. Spirits were low. Soon the services of the pastor were in demand. It was his task to console the dying. First one, then several. We lost a total of around a dozen comrades. We buried the last who died in the West Indies. But the first bodies we sewed into sailcloth, weighed down with a grenade and laid to rest at sea. It was an awful time. I too was knocked down by the illness, and I seem to have been a serious case. When I awoke from my fog one time, a comrade was sitting next to me and he asked if I had something to tell my family at home. He looked at me with such concern in his faithful eyes. But a weed is a tenacious thing; I recovered. I was, however, thin as a thread and weak. I would feel the aftereffects for a long time to come and I was not able to perform as well as I had. Nevertheless, when we returned home I was still—I believe—entered into the list of the Imperial German Navy as the twenty-sixth of the 150 in my year.

In spite of the epidemic, our duties continued as usual. This was good because after an emergency, one should avoid spending time reflecting on what lies behind and instead look to the future. And so, all the sea cadets on watch who were not sick gathered at the bridge at noon so as to measure the sun's upper culmination and then determine the latitude, using the sextant. Affably, the navigation officer would come by every day a few minutes beforehand, and one time he asked the nearest naval cadet, "Tell me, where is the sun now?" Instead of giving the expected answer—"true south"—the man who had been asked smiled mischievously. Finally, our clever superior officer had been caught not knowing something for once! This was an opportunity that had to be taken advantage of and in no way was he to be spared the embarrassment. And so the naval cadet, feeling cunning, said "I don't know either, Captain Lieutenant!"

As we approached the West Indies, the lookout on the crosstree of the foretop was manned and finally we heard the long-awaited call that filled our hearts with enthusiasm after four weeks at sea: "To starboard, land ahead!" The monotony and all our troubles were at once forgotten. Were we not the children of good fortune to have the privilege of experiencing all these new things? Branches with green leaves, fruits and blossoms floated by on the water's surface and then, finally, we were in a harbour again. It was a harbour of the Leeward Islands, English territory, in other words. With navigation

in mind, the English had left some of the Leeward Islands to other nations, for example the French. Josephine, the wife of Napoleon I, was from there. Coming from the Windward Islands, the English enjoyed complete freedom of action and thus were already in a favourable position. They never lacked a sense for the practical and for their advantage. How would their well-known ocean hero and buccaneer Francis Drake do before a jury, I wonder? When King Philip II of Spain fell deeply in love with a lady of the court and wanted to board a boat with her on one of the calm palace ponds in his park, hoping to enjoy a lover's tryst, the beautiful woman said to him, "I hope we won't be caught by The Dragon,"[53] very much intending the double meaning. Even at the heart of Spanish power, one did not feel safe from the English privateers. Incidentally, how does "my country, right or wrong" fit in with the doctrine of democracy?

The quay was thronging with negroes, only negroes. No brown person could be seen, like in the time of Columbus. They had been pushed to the margins and killed by the European civilization. The moment land contact was permitted, the bumboats came alongside and unloaded their treasures onto the upper deck. And at the same time, the washerwomen came: "I am Susanne, I wash very well." We got our wash back after a few days. It had been beaten with stones and was heavily damaged. Several months later, when we headed for home, the clothing was worn out.

When we came ashore, we were surprised by paperboys who overran us with the latest dispatches: war news! Special features reported on England's intense battle against the Boers in South Africa. The expressions on the faces of the English officers and officials who were among those occupying the island were full of worry. Our hearts—our naturally sensitive German hearts—beat for Uncle Paul Kruger, the Boer president whom our emperor had telegraphed, our emperor who was likewise so German and emotional, and in this case did political damage because of it. We experienced an alarming sense of the tension in the world and were aware that we might be caught up in the whirl of events.

And so, considering the times, we welcomed it as normal that we, lying in the roads of Trinidad, did nothing but practice firing the canons in the following weeks. On December 23, it was my turn to be No. 1 gunner. Through hand signals, I indicated the direction, how high and to which side. Six naval cadets stood on each side of the gun, and, following my hand movements, they worked the blocks and tackle to point the gun in the right direction. It was an enormously awkward arrangement, and like in the time of Nelson,

[53] T.N. The Dragon i.e. "El Draque" was the Spanish nickname for Francis Drake.

hitting the target was more or less a matter of chance. Two other comrades operated the elevating mechanism and the slide.

Something else that was old-fashioned and primitive was loading. Today there are cartridges with a brass casing. Back then, no one thought of such luxuries. The gun powder was in raw silk bags. After firing, the Krupp cross wedge clasp would be torn open, leaking a corrosive, reeking discharge of powder residue. After that a wiper on a long rod would be used to wipe the barrel clean. If this was not done thoroughly, glowing bits of residue would remain in the barrel, and when the new cartridge in a silk bag was inserted, there would be an explosion with serious consequences for the gun crew. Due to this situation, the crew was always torn between speed and safety. Incidentally, we always fired a broadside, concentration fire. For this reason, we had to control the salvo interval very carefully.

The word "salvo" suddenly brings to mind the face of a dear comrade. It was in the middle of the First World War. Before putting to sea, we Destroyer Officers from the Flanders flotillas were sitting in a rail car that we had moved directly in front of our moored vessel at the Zeebrügge jetty. It served us as an open mess hall and there were lots of people around. Warm drinks as well as snacks were available. Our comrade, who had been on leave and who counted as one of the most lively among us, came in unexpectedly and was noticeably quiet. After we had drilled him for a while, he finally admitted to the delight of us bad boys that he, the eternal bachelor, had gotten engaged. "You should have made that decision earlier. One of us here has six children already! You'll never be able to catch up!" His honour wounded, the teased man quickly replied, "Just wait, you'll see. With my salvo interval, I'll catch up with him." Clearly, nothing could be done about this big gun! Many years later, during the Second World War, I saw him again, in the middle of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. We were so long in being reunited that the traffic policeman up in his traffic tower almost had a fit. My first question was, "How is the salvo interval coming?" A shadow came over his face when he told me that nothing had come of it. I felt so badly for the poor fellow and his crushed hopes. Shortly after this, he fell while on board the "*Blücher*" during the entry into Oslo. He was a *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche,* and this is how he will live on in my memory.

For the operation of our old-fashioned guns, the fuse also played an important role. If it was not the way it was supposed to be, that is if the firing pin was not held until impact, the explosion could happen at the wrong time. For this reason, the fuses were carefully inspected before being screwed in. This was done by the No. 1 gunner, and it involved holding the fuse to the ear and shaking it. If it rattled, it had to be thrown overboard through the hatch. To make sure we remembered this, long-winded instructions were drummed into

our heads, which we were made to recite when preparing the gun to be fired. In the excitement of shooting, we usually got it wrong, however. I remember the following little verse that someone stuttered by mistake to our great delight: "If it rattles, then it doesn't rattle. If it doesn't rattle, it will be thrown overboard." Our petty officer was ready to pull his hair out.

When, after overcoming all of these obstacles, I had the target—a nice regular circle—in my sights, I pulled the cord attached to the gun lock and when the smoke had settled—we were firing one gun at a time—no circle could be seen anymore; it had been knocked down by my bullseye shot. But the praise that I received had a bitter aftertaste. The target had to be repaired and reinstalled. The time spent doing this jeopardized our Christmas plans. But in the end, it all worked out. We celebrated cheerfully in our mess hall under green, tropical trees. By the light of burning candles, we unpacked the Christmas parcels that we had taken on board before setting sail, and, with sweat running down our faces, we dreamt of home with its ice and snow.

Over the Christmas holidays, we enjoyed spending our free time sailing in the ship's boats. One time a gust of wind knocked us over. While swimming in my clothes I could feel how weak I'd become due to the illness. A fishing boat with negroes approached us. From the distance we could already hear them calling: "Beware of the sharks!" Instinctively I began pumping my legs. Soon we were all on the keel of our boat, our legs pulled up. The first shark came just as we were getting into the fishing boat that was coming to our rescue. It was moving how these kind people took care of us. They towed our capsized boat and brought us back to the ship.

I recall the following incident: in Trinidad, at the racetrack, I participated in a horse race on polo horses. With God's grace, I finished safely, coming in third. In the centre of the racetrack there were hundreds of East Indians, whom we would refer to today as displaced people: they had been moved by the English from East India to the West Indies, which is to say they had been pushed about 180 degrees around the globe. To recover from my tiring ride, I went on a short hike up one of the surrounding hills. Lying by himself under a palm tree was one of these handsome people. He told me how he and his family were deported by the English when they were on the brink of starvation. His gaze was fixed on the setting sun. I wondered what he was thinking about. Home? And why didn't he go home? "Means don't allow me that." This sad phrase remained with me throughout my life. How often one is unable to do the best or a good thing because "means don't allow me that." These poor people, too, will always, simply because of their race, remember their original home as generations go by and will remain a foreign entity in America. This makes us notice how God raises his finger threateningly. Every

transgression comes back to haunt us on Earth and God will not allow the trees of the now victorious countries to grow to the sky.

One of my comrades was hit in the mouth with a rigging block one night when the wind was high, and one of his teeth was damaged. It needed to be repaired, something that could be done in Trinidad. We rang the bell of a dentist who had a sign advertising his practice up on his garden gate. He resided in a small, cozy bungalow. A negro as tall as a tree opened the door and showed two rows of magnificent snow-white teeth. With this, he showed the fresh strength of his race in comparison to us tired Europeans, with our gum disease, our gold teeth and our prostheses. We were as scared of this warrior-like dentist as Hansel and Gretel must have been of the witch. But it was unnecessary. He was a capable practitioner. He quickly and professionally remedied the situation. This goes to show how much competition is developing for us arrogant and small-minded whites who believe we have all the answers. Let's just remember the significant scientific achievements of the Japanese, which will be followed sooner or later by the other peoples. That is the punishment for the fundamental error of the whites: *propter invidia,* the envy that makes us Europeans begrudge others the butter on their bread. When will we finally stop doing this and instead come together and work together?

I would like to tell a happy story about this comrade, which took place a few years later. We were merry young naval lieutenants. At one rollicking party in the mess hall, which was attended by the highly esteemed Fleet Commander and Grand Admiral Koester, my comrade performed as a magician. He politely asked the Fleet Commander if he had a twenty-mark gold coin on him. The Grand Admiral, though obviously dubious, fished one out of his wallet and gave it to the magician. Amidst a general sense of excitement, the lieutenant now asked: "Does our Grand Admiral know ze difference and ze similarity between zis gold piece and ze sun?" Looking worried, the admiral said he didn't. The lieutenant replied, "Ze difference is zat ze sun rises in ze east. Ze gold piece does not do zis. But both disappear in ze vest!" At this, he slipped the gold piece into his vest and vamoosed. The Grand Admiral never saw the gold coin again, but he knew that we would have a merry night out and think of him with gratitude.

The West Indies have their own quality, like every corner of the world. If you've been there, you will always enjoy going back. There is an indescribable bounty of fruit and fish; there's the glowing sun and the magnificence of the tropics, good tennis courts and golf courses, cool springs and dreamy nights with lightning bugs all around, glowing fish in the night-dark water that flit about like ghosts, and little waves that seem like liquid gold. Now and then you see the wake left by a shark on the hunt, glowing like liquid gold. We

caught one of them. He thrashed about dangerously when we hoisted him out of the water. Everyone ran for cover. When we cut the heart out along with some pieces of muscle, it kept beating for a long time, even though we had killed the shark with several shots as we hoisted him out of the water.

Our training unfolded as per the program. After we had mastered the practical training quite well, the focus shifted to theory. Lots of navigation, mathematics, languages, infantry drills, knowledge of the service and flagging and saluting regulations. The latter were particularly interesting. They included all international conventions of an ancient seafaring tradition. We learned etiquette, visiting other ships and offices on shore. The number and order of gun salutes. Woe betide anyone who did not have a firm handle on these areas. He would be considered a poorly educated proletarian and thus would bring honour to neither himself nor his ship, not to speak of his nation. How elegant and smart-looking was the commander's gig when she sailed off with six select rowers looking impeccable in their uniforms and showing the utmost discipline as they leaned into their oars in a steady rhythm, the commander at the tiller. And he stood adorned with all his badges on the gold-trimmed two-master, the spotless brass parts of the boat sparkling. We were always very proud in those moments and felt ourselves to be the sons of a respected, powerful and oh-so-beloved fatherland.

In later years I once experienced some dissonance due to these questions of etiquette. It was in the Yokohama harbour. The Japanese Naval Minister, Admiral Yamamoto I believe, was carrying out his official visit to the Second Admiral of our cruiser squadron. When sailing off, he stopped with his boat some distance away and waited, with flags raised, for the salute that he was due—seventeen shots, I believe. But because he had already been saluted in the course of that year, we did not believe that the salute was necessary. And so the minister sailed off without a salute after an embarrassing minute of waiting. An enormous faux pas, in other words. Hardly an hour later, our ambassador came to help us iron out the situation. The task of being the "prince of atonement"[54] fell to me given my station as flag lieutenant of the Second Admiral. Because the Japanese admiral did not speak English very well but had a good command of French, I spent the following night learning a French apology by heart. The next morning, I was given a gala uniform to wear, with a long tail and white cuffs, and was sent ashore with the two-master in full regalia. At the quay, a magnificent landau carriage of the Japanese admiralty awaited. Like a high-ranking diplomat, I was

[54] T.N. Following the Boxer Rebellion in China, Prince Chun delivered the message of his nation's atonement for the murder of Germany's ambassador and was given the mocking byname "Prince of Atonement."

driven to the ministry, where I was met by servants, guards presenting weapons, and adjutants with aiguillettes, who led me to the minister, who was surrounded by his staff. In the most polite and urgent manner, I delivered my speech to him, without fumbling. I must have done a good job. The minister approached me, shook my hand, said a few charming words and accepted the invitation with gratitude. I then said goodbye and bowed deeply in response to the Japanese officers.

Chapter 9
Venezuela and a First Real Taste of War

In Central America there was war as well, a whirlwind that was to pull us in—war over Venezuelan oil, fought by two interested parties with smaller armies that they maintained. The president of Venezuela, Andrade, had gone to Barbados, it seems with his bags filled to the top, as is not unusual. Two pretenders, Castro and Paredes, were the heads of the two opposing forces.

Having received instruction from home via telegraph, we quickly made for Puerto Cabello, a small Venezuelan port west of La Guaira, the harbour town of Caracas, the capital of the country. Dumb naval cadets that we were, we expected only to be heroes. What a different lesson our lives, so rich in disappointments, would teach us, making us peer down the abysses from which the dark forces emerge—the forces that shape human history. It was in vain that Antigone implored her sister Ismene: "Dear sister, I am here to join you in love, not in hate!" Christ expressed the same thoughts with even more urgency, and sacrificed himself to lend more power to his teachings. In vain! With our own young eyes, we would see how people were killed, their bodies destroyed, for the oil business.

When we anchored in Puerto Cabello, we found ourselves in the middle of a small, international squadron. There was the English cruiser *Pearl*, the American *Detroit*, the French *Troude* and the Dutch *Sommelsdijk*. The senior officer was the English commander, who assumed leadership in the unfolding acts of war. We acquainted ourselves with the situation: in the fort in front of us on the beach was Paredes's party while above us in a fort on a hill was Castro with his men. A little way off from the lower fort was the small town of Puerto Cabello, looking like a toy box under palm trees. It was stupefyingly hot, and to top it all off, the battle station had to be manned. There could be no interaction with the land; all visits were forbidden. If necessary, we would have to take our compatriots who lived in Puerto Cabello on board and protect them. The next day, we weighed anchor and cruised to and fro just outside the harbour because Castro's war vessels were going to put into harbour and take part in the military action. At midday a nice launch came out of the harbour. It brought Parades, who came to visit our commander. He was a magnificent soldierly sight, dressed in an impeccable uniform. We were especially impressed with his long cavalry sabre, with which he would have been able to slice an enemy's body in half, all the way to the saddle.

In the evening we were back at anchor in the harbour. Looking through the binoculars, we could see that barbed wire had been

strung up around the town and that various barricades had been erected at the arterial road. At midnight, we suddenly heard the whistle: "Everybody up! Prepare to maneuver!" Drunk with sleep, we staggered on deck holding our hammocks, only to duck down right away. Above our heads, shells were whistling by which were being shot from the lower to the upper fort and vice versa. It was an uncomfortable position to be in because our tall masts were almost in the space that was being raked by the artillery. It was our baptism of fire. And then came the whistle: "Weigh anchor! Prepare for battle!" It was a wild situation: weighing the anchor to the sound of a squealing pig, setting the sails and preparing the guns for firing. Anything that had arms and legs was hustling, and Ombre in the rigging cursed over the disruption of his nighttime peace and quiet. Castro's ships had entered and, drifting alongside us, were firing at the lower fort which returned the fire. Fires broke out in the fort and—as it appeared to us—also in the outer town. Ringing out from the barricades was intense infantry fire mixed with cannon shots. Added to this was heavy smoke and fire in different buildings. We kept ducking whenever a shell whistled by too closely above us. Gradually we made our way out of the harbour. All the other warships were already out. The next morning, the fight for Puerto Cabello came to a sudden end when Paredes suffered a wound to his head from shrapnel. With that, and with several dead, the oil war was over.

In the afternoon we were sent ashore to have a look at the battle zone, help out and learn from the situation. When we moored at the quay, a rowdy man was lying on the sun-soaked planks. He was holding his gun under the planks and now, as cool as a cucumber, he was shooting under the planking, where a person who was scared to death was holding on and trying to avoid getting shot by changing his position slightly. We whacked the man over the head so that he would stop shooting and got out the now very happy fellow who had been used as a target. We got him on board our cutter and gave him food and drink. Once refreshed, he skedaddled, and we never saw him again.

We had not been ashore long before we heard loud screaming that was getting closer. Poor Parades had been put on the coach-box of a horse and cart. He had a bloody bandage around his head and was hanging in the arms of two gadflies, who were displaying him to the residents and mocking him. Then we watched as he was put in chains. From "Hosanna" to "Crucify!" What ghastly beasts we human beings are.

Near the barricades, the signs of battle were especially noticeable. Kepis, guns and cartridge cases were lying around, and several dead people too, whose corpses were already beginning to become bloated in the terrible heat. We took the wounded, who came crawling out of their hiding places when they saw us approach, to our

dressing stations, which had been set up by the warship doctors. The air was stifling, filled with the smells of burning and putrefaction, and felt like it was saturated with contagia. Frightened faces peered out at us through windows. Horse cadavers lay around here and there, stinking and abuzz with flies.

To avoid epidemics, swift sanitary measures were needed. Labour battalions took the animal cadavers and fallen men to a square in front of the cemetery. There, the human corpses were separated out and two piles of bodies, divided by some wood, were doused with petroleum. A match completed the work and the burnt offering and human sacrifice sent up its flickering flames and smoke to God's blue sky, which was so radiant it seemed impossible that we children of Cain, through hatred and manslaughter, were continuing to heap new guilt upon ourselves.

The dreadful smell almost made us young lads sick. And we felt miserable in general. All of our illusions were crushed. We were almost blinded by what we now saw behind the stage, where before we had only had a view from the civilized parterre of bourgeois conceptions and ideas. This day was truly filled with impressions and, I might add, horror. In the evening, a train of boats came—a steam pinnace with many empty row boats—to take us back to the ship. We helped the doctors take down their aid stations and put the equipment in the boats, and then we all took a seat on the thwarts. We were happy when the steam pinnace began to tug, when the boats followed, one after the other, in her wake, and when we heard the soft splashing of the waves again. Fresh air was coming in off the sea and we greedily filled our lungs with it, but the disgusting stench of the pyres remained in our noses for days. Food didn't taste good at all. We had all become serious. Life had somehow taken on a new face, and there was a kind of weight burdening the entire crew.

To ease this burden, most of the crew went on a trip two days later. Sailing against the current, we took our boats up a small river that flowed into the harbour; this led us into the beautiful virgin forest. We stopped at a clearing and went ashore, set up camp and lit a campfire. We fried ourselves some lunch over the fire. Everyone then jumped into the clear and cool water that flowed down from the mountains. When you experience a scarcity of fresh water, it is the greatest relief to be able to go splashing around in fresh water without any restrictions. We acted like children and enjoyed every moment of that day. On our way back, we disembarked from the boats and got into a tight marching formation and, with our onboard band ahead of us, marched to our old marches, our posture impeccable, all the way down to the square where two days previously the dead had been burned.

But what did we see? A jolly public festival with music and dancing, singing and laughing, whooping and hollering. We couldn't

understand it. It truly seemed unreal, like a fata morgana. Beyond the street, close to us, was the cemetery, surrounded by a stone wall. A heavy iron gate with bars guarded its entrance. The contrast between life and death was so stark, and our experience of the past days churned inside me once again. Life was almost breaking me, making me go mad. Then my eyes fell on some gilt letters that gleamed above the iron gate of the cemetery in the evening sun. I deciphered: *Transierunt omnes tamquam umbra, tamquam nuntius percurrens*. They all pass over like a shadow, like a messenger hurrying past.

Chapter 10

Heading Home and Toasting a New Century

Eventually it was time to start thinking about our journey back home. Henceforth, we largely set our course eastward. We did, however, call at the port of many of the lovely Antillean Islands, each one more charming than the last. The island of St. Thomas, which belonged to the Danish state, was for sale. We heard that Germany was among the countries vying to buy it, but did not want to pay the asking price. For the richness of this island any price would have been worth paying. A Danish hussar officer came on board as an escort officer. He was dressed in a colourful peacetime uniform, made up of a laced-up attila,[55] aiguillettes and a busby. He must have sweated profusely in the heat. He spoke German fluently and was from one of the old noble families based in the Schleswig border region which had traditional connections to both Denmark and Germany.

The posts as governor of these West Indian islands must have been extraordinarily wonderful. I remember an English governor who charmingly took us in. Along with a few comrades, I was in his welcoming house on the hilltop several times. The trade wind brushed through the open doors and windows when we ate dinner with him. There were table lanterns on the table as the draft would have blown out regular candles. One of his daughters was married to an English naval officer who was carrying out two years of service on land as the adjutant of his father-in-law and was living, as we said, in luxury's lap. We played tennis with him and the ladies for hours on end, and felt safe and sound and altogether at home. In the many English houses that have opened their doors to me in all parts of the world, I've always had the same feeling of being "at home." It is completely incomprehensible to me how our two nations had to fight each other to the point of exhaustion not once but twice. Beyond an idealistic point of view, it would have been cheaper not to fight. In any case I will personally always have a feeling of gratitude for my English hosts and will not allow anyone to sway me from my strong inner affection for them.

Here a letter falls into my hands which I wrote to my sons in September 1940. It reads as follows:

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[55] C.D. A short, decorative jacket often with intricate braiding, typically worn by officers in Hussar regiments.

Today we had breakfast at the Japanese consul-general's. One of the people there was the Japanese ambassador from Berlin. I was seated next to my old friend Admiral F., who was on the same training ship as I when we joined the navy. During our dinner conversation, the hope that the English empire would weather the storm of the Second World War was of concern to both of us. If it did not, there would be unimaginable consequences.

This was the view of our navy and our German intelligentsia. Was it truly necessary to tear each other apart until we bled white after our emperor had established that blood is thicker than water and after we had a fleet agreement that satisfied both sides and after we had offered to support England on land and at sea with our army and navy? And after we had offered to leave Alsace-Lorraine to France? We lost two beloved sons over this madness, and in the great wide world there are only the shards of former happiness left, which we are now trying to patch together. Far be it from me to criticize in a malicious or hurtful way, yet I can't help but note that Churchill, for all his service to his fatherland, made some serious misjudgements when considering the situation as a whole. Because of this, he was the cause of an irremediable weakening not only of Europe but also of his fatherland. Recently, a thoughtful quote has been ascribed to him: "I butchered the wrong pig (Germany)." A realization that has come too late. If he were truly an outstanding man, he would have been able to unite Europe and bring it to a one-of-a-kind blossoming. I feel with certainty that history, when it will pronounce its judgement one day, will show me to be in the right.

At this meal at the Consulate General of Japan, one of the directors of the Krupp company gave an impressive short talk about a problem that is of concern to all industrial states today, including Japan, namely the massing together of large groups of workers in several industrial centres. Conversely, this can be expressed as rural exodus, the death of every nation. He said that we must increase the welfare of farmers by bringing their standard of living more in line with that of city dwellers. To this end, roads, apartments, lighting, bathrooms etc. should be improved. It was his view that through this, there would necessarily arise a shift in the price level. This reorganization would ultimately have to be paid for by city dwellers. He appealed to the audience's reason and held that it would be best to dedicate all efforts to this development rather than to destruction through war. The speech left a noticeable impression on us listeners, and to me the speaker seemed almost like a prophet who could literally see the dangers approaching. And all the while the magnificent man, who was so close to my heart and whom I honoured so much,

was as pale as death.[56] It turned out that he had just received word that the ship on which his son, a prisoner of war, was being transported from England to Canada had been torpedoed by a German submarine and that there were very few survivors, whose names still remained unknown. Thus, the poor father was teetering between hope and despair. As came to light later, his son was lost.

Back then, in the stupefying heat of the Gulf of Mexico, we coined an expression that, while it did not sound very pretty, could hardly be beat in terms of the vividness with which it described the constant sweating that caused all our pores to become inflamed, giving us heat rash: we said that we had "smoke coming out between our ribs." Unfortunately, there was too little fresh water to relieve this itchy torture. And so we scratched and smoked from our pores. It was no wonder that my thoughts now flew to my homeland, where there was ice and snow and winter sports. Coming alive before my eyes was an image of the small village church from my early childhood, where I stomped through the deep snow with my parents at Christmastime, making my way up the hill to the church, the sound of whose bells echoed far into the Silesian landscape. And me there, filled to the brim with the pious faith of a child. And then my parents and I would sit in the church pew designated for estate owners. Each of us then got out a candle. These were yellow, looked like rolled honeycomb and gave off the heavenly scent of beeswax. Each churchgoer put one in front of himself, and so the church was filled with the faint glow of hundreds of candles and the scent of melting wax. During the service in the unheated church, however, the cold slowly penetrated your every limb and I was glad when it was time to go back home to our Christmas tree and presents.

It was with longing that we thought of such cold and fresh air that would obliterate the languidness that had seized us during this stay in the tropics, which seemed to be stretching out more and more. Under these circumstances, the new year arrived. I cite from my logbook the following passage:

> *"On January 1, 1900, flags were flown from the topmasts. At noon, all men were called astern. The commander gave an address in which he expressed his wish that the coming century would show our fatherland as much mercy as the previous one had. In this hope, the new century was welcomed with a 21-gun salute. Having greeted it in this way almost feels like an omen now, for the century has raged with cannon thunder, blood and tears.*

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[56] T.N. We believe that he is referring to the Krupp director rather than the admiral he is sitting next to, but it is not perfectly clear. There is a fragment of a name ("...nowsky"?) handwritten next to this passage on page 71 in the manuscript.

On January 27, the emperor's birthday, the 21-gun salute was performed again, and in the notes that I took at the time, a deep respect and enthusiasm pours forth as I relate how we toasted to him with eight strokes of the ship's bell at noon, giving three thundering hurrahs.

On our way home, it began to get cooler, and almost without a break we came from one low pressure system into the next. Our ship yawed as it never had before, the foresails flew off the leeches. All sails were close-reefed and ultimately taken down to the extent that they did not need to be kept in place for the purpose of steering. But this was still not enough. We had to heave to and get out oil bags to help with the breakers.[57] Everything was wet. Gigantic water fountains released their spray all around the ship. The riling of the elements was magnificent and the cooling effect was pleasant and revived me greatly.

Having been properly tossed about, we arrived in the Azores and put into the harbour of Fayal. Then it was on to the Bay of Biscay, north to the English Channel, past the Eddystone Lighthouse and Start Point, past the Isle of Wight, with which we were now familiar, and on to the last foreign harbour, Nieuwediep in Holland. We carried on quite a bit with the Adelborsts, the Dutch naval officer candidates. Friendships were forged that would last a good long while, and I corresponded with some of the friends and comrades I met there for some years. In Amsterdam, I ensconced myself in the naval museum, where I learned about so many heroic deeds and nautical experiences. We felt entirely at home in Holland and departing was difficult. I'm repeating the notes I took at the time when I write that, when we put to sea, we were bid farewell by the friendly calls of a dense crowd of people at the quay and by the sound of our national anthem. We answered these friendly gestures with three hurrahs in praise of the country that had hosted us. When we had already left the Zuider Zee, three Dutch torpedo boats came steaming up behind us, wishing us a safe return with flag signals. When we went aboard these boats, we noticed how in almost every locker there was a picture of the young Queen Wilhelmina. She and her good land had conquered our hearts. What has happened to this feeling of unity? Like everywhere in Europe, it is now a heap of ruined happiness, a mountain of grief and hatred. If only all state leaders had started out as mariners, if only they could have got to know the world as it really is, how everyone longs for tranquility and peace – then we would have been spared the terrible events of the past forty years.

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[57] T.N. Used in emergencies, these are bags of coarse material which allows oil to drip into the sea in heavy weather. An oil slick is produced which prevents waves from breaking over the deck of a boat.

Chapter 11
The Comforts of Home

Finally, we were back home. We moored in the Kiel harbour. What a year we had behind us! How the new environments and our profession had reshaped us! Children had become young men, and we had truly earned the Fähnrich's[58] sword knot and the petty officer's braid. After we had passed our qualifying exams, we had fourteen days' home leave. I made my way to Saarbrücken to see my uncle, aunt and cousins who, as they had told me in a letter, were pining for my return, waiting to hear about the flying fish that landed right in the pot, about Ombre, our monkey, about Indians, sharks whose hearts still beat for a long time after they were cut out, about the heat and storms, about the many who fell ill with dysentery and about our baptism of fire at Puerto Cabello. I had a small gift for each of them: for my uncle, two bottles of Curacao, purchased on the very island, for my aunt Bay rum and Florida Water, which were well-known perfumes, ties for my cousins as well as a cocoa fruit that I had picked myself in a plantation, neck- and headscarves, lacework, handkerchiefs and little blankets. I was so proud of all of this.

During the long train ride from the coast to Saarbrücken, I was overcome by the memory of my beloved grandmother, whom I would not be seeing. It was only in these moments that I was able to become fully aware of this loss of love and the yawning emptiness that would be staring at me from the rooms she used to occupy. It was only now that I had time for this, and so I fell apart when nobody saw it. I grieved for my grandmother, the friend of my youth. Perhaps it was for my youth itself that I was grieving, a youth that was, I could feel now, gone for good.

Now we were at the naval academy in Kiel. Life there had a completely different character. We were young gentlemen, and for every four of us there was a batman who kept our footwear and clothing in order. As is usually the case in situations like this, it proved to be true that one batman cannot serve two men, let alone four. The batmen quickly learned to take advantage of the situation to the greatest degree possible. If you needed one, he was always busy with someone else; he was always in town for someone else or was himself on duty. Being served like this was wrong, a psychologically misguided measure. Our batmen developed into Korah's mob[59] and made life difficult for our shared superiors. All the more as some

[58] T.N. An officer candidate, coming from the term *Fahnenträger,* flag bearer. There is no exact English equivalent.

unscrupulous fellows took advantage of their batmen when they were privy to knowledge about the forbidden deeds these batmen had done. They used them as *postillon d'amour* or else as doormen when the gentlemen came back to the quarters merry with wine well after the evening tattoo. Then a move would be made to avoid being entered in the gatekeeper's leave record, with the batman providing much-needed help. Sometimes this would result in awful scenes that did not do much credit to the rank of the Fähnrichs.

And in general, we weren't angels. Every afternoon except Wednesdays and Saturdays after our shift, we had a two-hour-long work period that ended in time for us to get to concerts and plays. This meant that I was once able to go to a concert performed by Edward Grieg. For me this memory looms large: this dignified gentleman with his enchanting music and the many rounds of applause that seemed like they would never end. This experience is like a treasure in my memory-chest. Nevertheless, I was no angel. I even acted quite mean once during a work period. One of our roommates was a man from Württemberg against whom all of us harboured a grudge because of his bad character traits and, especially damaging to his reputation, he told tales and squealed on us. This could not go unpunished, so I, sitting next to him at the table, needed to pour a little gasoline on the woolen tablecloth in front of where he'd been sitting when he got up to go to his locker. When he sat down again and was just commenting about the smell of gas, someone lit a cigarette and threw the burning match onto the damp tablecloth. A flame shot up and the pitiable fellow, scared to death, fell backwards without—thankfully—hurting himself. Pack of hounds that we were, we were thrilled with ourselves like Max and Moritz[60] over our wicked deed. And after that our comrade stopped squealing. Fiat Justitia!

In our living quarters, there were six of us to a room. It was a very nice living room with a good view, mostly of the interesting harbour. For every two living rooms, there was one shared bedroom and a shared bath and shower room. We enjoyed these comforts greatly after the constriction and Spartan lifestyle of the previous year. Our duties mainly included attending lessons in which very high standards were maintained. Mostly there was navigation and excellent schooling in mathematics. In addition came very thorough schooling in ship building and naval engineering. Language classes were important, too, but unfortunately the teachers, though very knowledgeable, could in no way handle the choir of revenge[61] that we could be. Instead of speaking French with us, the French teacher

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[59] T.N. A reference to the Hebrew Bible, Numbers 16:1–40, where a mob forms around Korah, who rebelled against Moses.

[60] T.N. A reference to Wilhelm Busch's blackly humorous tale about two boys and their pranks.

allowed himself to be instructed by us about seamanship. One time we plotted to jump up all at once and stare out at the harbour as if fascinated by something. The teacher, greatly interested, was told that there was a vehicle with underwater sails going by that was barely visible above the surface—"There! There! That's where it is! Don't you see?"

Another time a musical clock was placed under the teacher's desk and was set off using a thread just as the teacher was sitting down in a dignified manner: the joyful *Pariser Einzugsmarsch* (Paris Entry March) rang out for all to hear! We sang along with it with gusto, not skipping the very indecent lyrics which have been in common use in the defence forces for decades. "Who is playing the music?" "Oh, Professor, the band of the First Seamen's Division is going by." Of course this division was not there and when the musical clock kept playing, the truth came out. None of us would admit guilt. We had no idea which sinful person could have been so impertinent as to put a musical clock under his desk, and none of us knew how to make it stop. And so the teacher, a true Hans Huckebein the Unlucky Fellow,[62] took one of us and the still-playing musical clock to the principal. The music rang out through the long hallways. Out of every classroom peered surprised faces, which soon lit up with a knowing smile. The principal was the blowhard sea captain v. Schröder. It seems he had a hard time suppressing his laughter, but then he made his way to our classroom with his eyes aflame and said these meaningful words: "I will squeeze you against the wall until you bleed." Said and not done. He made sure to get out before his feigned strictness suffered a blow. We felt that he would have just loved to join our laughter.

The naval academy is housed in an impressive red brick building located at the harbour and surrounded by a park and tennis courts of which we made ample use. Next to it is the office building of the Education Officer, an admiral whom we were supposed to respect, and though we might have had respect for him, we could never quite bring ourselves to show it in practice. His villa was home to many pigeons, something in which he took great delight. But a Fähnrich loves his pigeon roast. And so we imitated Winnetou[63] and shot

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[61] T.N. Sometime in the 19th century, "*Chor der Rache*" had become a mocking expression used for any "bunch of lowlifes." It appears to go back to the phrase "*Korps der Rache*" (corps of revenge), which meant a group of soldiers.

[62] T.N. A reference to another one of Wilhelm Busch's stories / characters. Published in 1867.

[63] T.N. Winnetou is a fictional Native American hero of several novels written by Karl May, one of the best-selling German writers of all time, in the late 1800s.

pigeons with a trusty air gun. They tasted wonderful, and it was never my experience that a bad conscience poisons the meat.

The food served at the academy was excellent and made up for the whole past year of slim pickings. With longing I think of the wonderful second breakfast that was served around 10 am during recess. Bouillon with egg, magnificent salads and buns with toppings. My mouth still waters today when I think of it.

We also got enough exercise and fresh air. There were excellent fencing lessons with sabre, foil and bayonet. I was especially fond of the latter, even though the heavy bayonet rifles were not easy to handle. If you landed a good hit on your opponent after breaking through his defense, there was no question that he would roll onto the mat like a shot rabbit. Your success was plain to see, in other words. We were also given a terrific challenge in gymnastics, and each of us learned so much that we were later able to show our families our routines. Naval vessel training was a true delight. Repeating certain exercises again and again, we learned how to drive a steam pinnace and sometimes even a large launch boat, without the passengers necessarily having to purchase life insurance beforehand. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs: it of course happened that, occasionally, a steam pinnace was rammed and could just barely be clipped into the davits[64] at the landing pier before it sank. But there were no losses.

Particularly enjoyable were the many sailing yachts that were available to us at all times. We went on so many trips on the weekends, spent so many sunny and stormy hours on them, and so many times we nearly found ourselves in distress. But this did not bother anyone—it was simply something you had to go through to become a mariner who was worth his salt. Despite the meticulous supervision of the Boat Officer, for whom it was not necessarily a great pleasure to know that there were so many boats way out there in the faraway straights and sounds, we never felt that we were being paternalized or not trusted. We believed we were entirely left to our own devices and therefore had to rely on ourselves in every respect.

At Kiel Castle, right at the harbour, lived the brother of the emperor, Prince Henry of Prussia.[65] He was as handsome as a picture and an outstanding officer. Just before the war, he was our Fleet Commander, and he enjoyed special respect and love in our officer corps. When he commanded a ship of the line,[66] he made a name for himself through his extraordinary ship handling. He often

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[64] C.D. Davits are small cranes used on ships, often in pairs, for raising and lowering lifeboats and other equipment.

[65] C.D. Prince Henry (Prinz Heinrich) of Prussia was a close friend of my maternal great grandfather, Gustav Bachmann, Admiral of the Imperial German Navy.

maneuvered the ship right up to the buoy, without recourse to a cutter. This was only possible, however, because his ship was of the Baden class, meaning that it had a very low forecastle which allowed a man to jump across to the mooring buoy and clip the mooring hook in place. But naturally only when the ship was very close to the buoy, and therein lay the art, which required good nerves on the part of the commander. My life later brought me together with the prince often, and I was always impressed by him, ever an exceptional man.

When a member of the royal family was taking a ride in the carriage, the coachman and the servant on the coach-box wore a silver ribbon with embroidered black eagles around their top hats. Then the petty officers and all enlisted men had to snap to attention. This was fine as long as there were only one or two people at a time. But when a number of soldiers on leave had been walking together in a group, it was a disaster: there was jostling and feet got stepped on. You can imagine what a hilarious impression this would have made on the many people from other nations who visited Kiel during Kiel Week. It was one of the reasons why people made fun of us. Eventually, as traffic increased, this custom was abolished.

During this year at the naval academy, a fight broke out between two Fähnrichs, both of whom happened to be as tall as trees. A court of honour found that a settlement through the use of weapons was necessary. And so the two had have a duel with sabres. One of the two received quite the slit through his cheek, and for the rest of his life he looked as if he had belonged to a student duelling fraternity. This seems to have been one of the very rare cases of a duel taking place between two officer candidates.

At the end of the year we had another exam, the so-called "principal naval officer exam." Passing it made you an unlimited licensed mariner, so it was definitely worth a lot. After all, in the following years quite a few of my comrades went to the merchant navy, where they found immediate employment as watch officers.

After a short home leave, we took special courses that gave us practical training in artillery, torpedo and infantry duty. First we went aboard the artillery training ship *Mars* for three months. It was filled with people because the courses for officers, petty officers and soldiers all ran at the same time. And so we lived in hulks that were kept alongside. Our hammocks were hung deep down in the former boiler room. We climbed down several chicken ladders to get to them, and some of us ran into difficulties when we, having had a good time on shore, came back in the dark, because there was only a

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[66] T.N. Some of the modern warships of the German Kaiserliche Marine were still called "*Linienschiff*" or ship of the line after the traditional Age of Sail warships.

bare minimum of lighting. Also, rats were once again our sleeping companions.

The first officer, Sea Captain Sch. was a very exacting and feared man. He was a bachelor, punctilious and painstaking in his duties and even more punctilious in the way he dressed, if that was possible. The only gloves he wore were white leather gloves and he was always checking for dirt by sticking his fingers in every corner. Woe betide any poor boatswain if the gloves came up dirty. But by being so rigorous, he ensured that our old veteran vessel, the Mars, was as if licked clean, even though the conditions for creating cleanliness were poor given the many students following a great number of courses. All the more as we went into Bülker Bay directly outside the Kiel harbour almost every morning; there, we opened up with all guns and continued on without interruption all the way into the evening. The guns we used here were more modern than the ones on the training ship, but there were a few museum pieces with which we had to familiarize ourselves because they were still used on the relief ships and armoured steam trawlers.

This reminds me of the revolver cannons. The gun operator had a crank in his right hand, which he turned to fire shots. It was an unwieldy and stubborn 3.7 cm gun whose construction was borrowed from the French mitrailleuse, which had made a name for itself in the war of 1870. Naturally we had a lot of lessons in artillery science. Because this involved so much math—a subject I dearly loved—particularly in ballistics, I took a lively interest in it and was rewarded with the recognition I hoped for when I received good grades at the end of the course.

In one of the last classes I teased a comrade whom we all simply called Fat Lühmann. To the last day of his life, he was a faithful and dear comrade. As an insurance man, he worked his way up the ladder in a legendary fashion after the First World War and ended up founding his own successful company in Düsseldorf. The painful aftermath of the second lost war finished him off. He has already been dead two years now. Back then in class I made this good-natured chubby man so wild that he suddenly drew his dagger and thrust it at me. He hit me in the muscle of my left upper arm, which still bears the scar today. The blood spurted out to the rhythm of my heartbeat between my fingers, which I instinctively pressed on the wound. Then I went to the ship's clinic, where a doctor happened to be on duty who could treat me right away. I was in pain for days. It felt as if someone had hit that muscle with a cudgel. And then it healed with no consequences whatsoever. I was mostly sorry for Lühmann. He fretted about his stupidity and for days and was deeply afraid for me.

There was a similar frenetic pace on the Blücher, the torpedo training ship. Several torpedo boats were assigned to her. We would

carry out attacks on her at night by driving these boats into her searchlights, which were meant to blind us—the tactic at the time. The commander was an original, Sea Captain B. He had been transferred from the merchant navy to what was the Prussian Navy at the time. He liked to speak Low German. Alongside learning the art of shooting torpedoes, which covered a distance of only 500 to 1000 metres maximum, we also had to learn to service them and prepare them for shooting. A lot of oil was used for this and soon we were, like all torpedo boat operators, "greasy." Our clothing took on the indescribable smell of oil, which was so potent that you couldn't get it out of the material for years. Later on, my good wife doggedly battled this aroma, which even spread throughout our apartment. But in the end, the only thing that helped was a thorough disinfection at the cleaners.

And so all the decks of the *Blücher* were bustling with groups of Fähnrichs working eagerly on the torpedoes. The insistent noise of the numerous air pumps filled the ship without pause. There was one torpedo launching tube at the bow and one at the stern as well as two on each broadside. This meant that if the ship was turned completely by 360 degrees, six torpedoes could be shot in sequence. Immediately after firing, a new torpedo would be loaded to prepare for the next shot. Up on the bridge, the sea captain was in charge. Six torpedo-catchers lay pointed in the direction of firing to bring the torpedoes back on board. Not only this, but a recovery boat also lay ready to pull up torpedoes that had hit the sea floor. This was dreadful work. I later dosed away weeks of my life on such recovery boats, my head over the gunwale, looking for bubbles rising up from the runaway. Out on a choppy sea, this was unpleasant, and it was even more unpleasant if you had something planned on shore. You could kiss goodbye any meetings with a woman, travel plans and other important things. And whenever you climbed over on the recovery boat, your faithful friends would call after you mockingly, "No cake, only trouble; no cake, look for bubbles!"[67]

Meanwhile, shooting in the narrow body of water of the Flensburg Firth, the *Blücher*, under the assertive command of the captain, performed large figure eights. A Fähnrich stood next to the commander and had to steer the ship according to his instructions:

> *See, Fähnrich, up there, the yellow lupin field belonging to Farmer Arps. When the right corner comes in line with the left corner of the red clover field belonging to Farmer Friedrichsen, you give the command, 'Twenty to port!' And then comes the shot from the bow right away. And when you then have* Holnis *in front of you, you put your rudder amidships and head toward* Holnis *until both broadside shots are out.*

[67] T.N. "*Ja, Kuchen, Kuchen, Blasen must du, Blasen suchen!*"

And it kept going like this, unremittingly. Captain B. always had precise landmarks and oriented himself on them in an eternal monotony. We got a kick out of him. Sometimes we tried to fool him by saying that we were sure the clover had just been mowed the previous day. The old gentleman would then become restless and only calm back down when he looked through his telescope and saw that the clover was in fact still standing.

We were very vain back then. The first moustaches were sprouting, but because they were forbidden by the highest cabinet order, some of us, supported by our good natures and heavy beard growth, grew fetching goatees, which had a seductive effect on the womenfolk. But soon a mocking verse was born, presumably originating in the envy of those lacking the facial hair that was given to the privileged few. They were called "Louis XIV, The Fifteenth, an early Louis the Child, because of his beard also Henri IV." We preferred to wear non-regulation uniforms to which we tried to add a personal touch. At some point, this got too much for the commander. We had to line up on the quarterdeck and Captain B. gave us a long, reproachful lecture in Low German. It ended with the unforgettable words, "Put your cap on backwards and sew on a red seat to your trousers and then you'll look swell!" This derision had a good educational effect.

During this time when we were being trained in all areas, the alarm drums were booming all the time, set off very skilfully by Admiral von Tirpitz[68] to call for an implementation of the German Naval Laws and their later amendments. Each time one was granted —each was a hard-won victory in the Reichstag—this brought an increase in numbers and with it a growth that demanded new arrangements and the commitment of each individual to the last. One has to consider at the same time there was an extraordinary influx of technological inventions that had to be addressed and implemented. All navy service regulations had to be created and moved forward without any established procedure and experience. At the same time the personnel had to be called up and trained, and a corps of petty officers and officers had to be created from the next generation of a Germany that thought entirely in continental terms and had no understanding for the concerns of a navy. In addition, the three-year term of service was introduced, which, for the navy, was completely ill-fated and nonsensical. Because of it, a third of the ship's crew was new on board following the discharge date of September 30. This meant that the fleet was not up to speed in the following months. This danger was mitigated by greatly pushing the trainees, and by

[68] C.D. Admiral von Tirpitz worked alongside my maternal great grandfather, Admiral Gustav Bachmann, and figures prominently in the history of the Bachmann family.

Christmas the ships could be made somewhat ready for battle again. To this aim, the new personnel were trained in infantry and strictly military skills for at least four weeks. What came out of this can be demonstrated by the words of my batman Gröczups, from Pillkallen,[69] which he said coolly whenever I asked him if he had completed a task: "Musta fergot, Herr Fähnrich." Not only this, but every fall half the officer corps changed on the ships. This measure was necessary amidst the great growth to ensure that enough officers were available for newly assigned duties, for the schools and for the support staff, whose numbers were soaring. Often switching spots and needing to complete courses, the personnel was always in a state of restlessness. Thus it was not possible for the officer corps to gain a thorough grip on the soldiers, the way we knew it from our old army. I discuss these matters because they provide an explanation for why at the end of the first war the navy was faced with the accusation that it was red and revolutionary. One reason for the dissolution was the previously described one. The navy was, however, healthy to its core and decent in its character as a whole. It was only a desperate slew of adventures that later led to the disaster.[70]

Still today I recall when the alert command for our *Brandenburg*-class ships came. The ships were swiftly prepared for a voyage to the tropics and their technical systems were overhauled. Then, near their mooring buoys, a tremendous number of prams and boats filled the harbour and their contents were offloaded on board. Transport and escort ships arrived and several army units embarked. Things were bustling as if it were a fun fair. Laughing and crying relatives pushed their way onto the piers, including many sweet female figures who were making hay of the high spirits. In our spare time we stood at the quays and eagerly absorbed these impressions. We envied everyone who belonged to the crew of these ships—they might as well have been gods. In the meantime, we were still completing our four-week infantry course and were learning how to lead a platoon of soldiers in the field in such a way that it would arrive at its destination in the right formation. Four weeks was of course too little time, but we had to make do. When push came to shove, the naval officer knew how to tap his own resources: during a great maneuver in the presence of the emperor, a larger formation of disembarked mariners commanded by a competent old captain was present, though the captain clearly did not enjoy having to move so many soldiers under the critical eyes of the large army. After the highest in command had assigned him his place within the other units, he positioned an officer in every corner of the square and commanded with a raised voice, "Fall in like in Wilhelmshaven."

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[69] T.N. Today's Dobrovolsk, Russia.

[70] T.N. Theophil is likely referring to the Kiel mutiny of November 3, 1918.

Following a moment of commotion, with everyone falling over one another, everything became orderly in an astonishingly short period of time and the bright blue-jackets stood in impeccable order in the assigned place. They wore white parade costumes with joyfully fluttering ribbons, their guns slung over their shoulders, brown gaiters on their legs—these magnificent-looking young people who had been chosen, were well fed, perfectly trained after several years onboard, with gleaming eyes: who could not love such troops? Our emperor had a special affection for the navy, and the feeling was mutual. What terrible pain it must have caused him when the navy collapsed in the crucial hour.

As I mentioned, we learned the bare minimum during a short infantry course, but what we did learn was actually the most important thing: how to give the command to change step or direction at the right time while everyone is marching in step. This was something we mastered and had down pat from then on. At the end of the course of instruction, we became Sabre-Fähnrichs, meaning that instead of carrying the short golden dagger, we wore a sabre in a leather scabbard with brass mountings, which was terribly cumbersome. But we were so proud of it! Near Lüneburg, I acquired a valuable sabre with a Damascus blade on which was engraved: "Draw me not without reason, sheathe me not without honour!" This gave expression to the basic tenets of our thinking at the time when everything was chivalrous. This sabre was with me all my life. I only lost it during the turmoil that ensued when the Red Army took Vienna. I hope its message will continue to teach.

Who could describe my immeasurable joy when, after completing my infantry course, I received the order to join the flagship of the second admiral of our east-Asia cruiser squadron, a man I loved and honoured so much: Rear-Admiral Friedrich Graf v. B., Adjutant à la suite of His Majesty the Emperor.[71] Here I was, with entirely new experiences awaiting me, including action in war. We could hear the call of the English Admiral Seymour ringing in our ears: "The Germans to the front!"

[71] T.N. Theophil must be referring to Friedrich "Fritz" Aimé Clothar Hugo Graf von Baudissin (b. 3 April 1852; d. 5 February 1921 in Berlin-Charlottenburg).

Part Four
Adventures in Asia

Chapter 12
Sailing to Shanghai

I find myself unable to begin the following pages with anything but the words of Gottfried Keller: "Drink, o eyes, what the eyelash can hold, Of the golden abundance of the world."[72] What more can one offer youth than to go out into the wide, wide world? And now we would even be able to go as far as Asia, shrouded as it was by legend, with fabulous accounts told by Il Milione, Marco Polo. With China still so separated from the West, these tales still had to be true. The excitement we felt in our young souls was great. The number of comrades who were leaving with me was small. A good dozen, approximately.

My home leave went by quickly. Our goodbyes were painful; after all, I would be gone for years. As it turned out, I was parting for good from my aunt Elise, the sister of my mother: I would not see her again because she would die before I returned. She lies next to her mother, my good grandmother, in the Protestant cemetery in Saarbrücken. Later her youngest son, my cousin Otto Wilhelm, would be buried next to her after he fell in Flanders at the beginning of the First World War. And after the First World War they would be joined by her husband, my unforgettable Uncle Otto, who retained his sense of humour till the very day he died. Of his four magnificent sons, three were taken from him in the First World War, a fatal blow for him. Not only this, but he was arrested by the occupation authorities following some careless remarks that arose from his patriotic feelings, and was kept under lock and key for weeks.

It was with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to Saarbrücken, to the house of my relatives who had sheltered me so faithfully when I was a child, to the circle of the joyful family which at the time was missing no one. It is always a mean thing, a farewell. As you watch someone turn around one last time and wave just before disappearing around the corner, you don't know whether you'll ever see him again. This is a realization that becomes ever more powerful, with every repeated painful experience, the older you get. The last words that my wife's father whispered to me on his deathbed as a final

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[72] T.N. "*Trink Auge, was die Wimper hält von dem goldnen Überfluss der Welt!*"

admonition shook me to the core: "Don't hang your heart too much on what you love. It makes parting too difficult."[73]

The train took me to Bremerhaven, where the 17,000-ton steamer *Prinzess Irene* took us on board. Our cabins were located deep in the middle of the ship, and didn't have any portholes. But it didn't matter. We weren't spoiled. That is the greatest gift of the navy: just as you can at times enjoy the most luxurious circumstances, you are also able to make do with the most modest ones. In the shortest period of time, you could turn yourself from a smoke-infested, salt-covered seaman moving ponderously in navy boots and an oilskin coat into an elegant officer in a ballroom uniform and patent leather shoes.

We were very impressed by the onboard menus. There was always food and drink available. There are no words to express what a capable machine the stomach of a Fähnrich is. Malicious gossip has it that we ate our way down the menu, top to bottom. This was an achievement as there were three different dishes to choose from for the meat course alone.

Antwerp flew by. We were only in the harbour for twelve hours to take passengers aboard and drop some off. We used the time to buy a few things. I recall that each of us bought a top hat. It doesn't make sense why we did so since we never used them in the hot climate of Asia; it was just the proper thing to do at the time. The neighbourhood around the harbour was entertaining, with music and dance halls next to bars, and people of all stripes. Back then before the wars, the world was rich. Money flowed through people's hands. Including through mine. Just before we sailed, I managed to call home for help, asking to have money wired to the German consulate in Naples.

In the next hours I lay fatigued in my berth, like almost everyone else, trying to make up for our Belgian experience. Then I was once more enveloped by the magic of the sea. I had a wonderful reunion with old friends whom I, now a seasoned mariner, knew from the cadet voyage. We passed by Trafalgar and Gibraltar, with Cape Spartel beckoning from the opposite shore, and then came the Mediterranean. A generation later, in the Second World War, our son[74] was to be hard at battle in this sea, in a submarine.

In front of me now is a letter that I wrote from Naples on November 13, 1901:

> *My dear ones! Thank you so much for your kind letters. They will likely be the last that I receive in the coming six weeks as no postal*

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[73] C.D. These profoundly sad, bizarre final words are understandable given that the man who uttered them had been abandoned at age 4 and subsequently suffered several more traumatic personal losses.

[74] C.D. The son he refers to here is Georg, his third son, born in 1921.

boats will be catching up to us. Beginning now, you will have to send your letters via the Imperial Royal Postal Service in Berlin, and I hope that you do write me right away, so that I at least have some news of home after about fourteen days out there. The letters to East Asia take about six weeks; every fourteen days mail is sent out with the Royal Post Office on the Lloyd steamships, meaning that I will receive mail at these intervals.

Our stay in Genoa was overshadowed by poor weather, but we nevertheless walked all around the city. Among other things, I saw the famous Campo Santo cemetery. This magnificent cemetery utterly contradicts our northern sensibilities, which are so powerfully expressed in Böcklin's paintings. As a work of art, the Campo Santo is of course remarkable, but what is missing is the sense of peace, and there is no sense of divine forgiveness and mercy. In contrast, the views of the hills around Genoa are marvellous, reminding me of some of Grandmother's old oil paintings.

Responding to my call for help from Antwerp, where I had exhausted my resources, you sent me fifty marks. The German consulate requested that I pick up the money, but I had to walk back and forth between the consulate and the post office several times before I had the transfer papers from the post office in my hands. When I then, half annoyed, half laughing, went back to the consulate, I was asked for identification papers, which I naturally did not have, only calling cards and letters.

Imagine someone travelling around the world with no identification documents in the year 1950. How splendidly far we have come, creating the greatest number of offices, thus setting in motion the greatest number of unproductive people. Next, there will be a personal supervisor for each one of us.

The very amiable Consul, whose name was Irmer, believed that I was the correct recipient of the transfer even without my identification papers and handed me the money. In this way, the gap until the next payday was filled and I had room to maneuver again. Yesterday we passed Elba,[75] *which is another corner of the earth that merits consideration. I thought of the famous hundred days spent by Napoleon whose fate occupies my mind with a magical power. A little later, we passed Rome, or rather Civita Vecchia. It radiated with the powers that shaped the world for centuries. Here it became very clear to me that I had passed the Rubicon of my life. There was no turning back; I could only shape my life following the path that I had already taken. Now we are in Naples, where we will be staying for a day. Where should we go? To the Blue Grotto, to Vesuvius, to Pompeii? As humanists, we have decided in favour of the latter and I am curious what the shadows of the dead lying under the ashes will whisper in my ear.*

Now I must disembark, so I will end this here.

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[75] T.N. Largest island in the Tuscan archipelago in Italy's Tyrrhenian Sea, where Napoleon was exiled in 1814–15.

Post script: We have just returned from Pompeii. What impressed me most was the inscription on one of the houses that was excavated in Pompeii: 'Hic habitat felicitas, nihil mali intret.' [Happiness dwells here, let no evil enter]. I would like to inscribe this on my own house someday. How wonderful it must be to offer a home to one's family and all of one's friends in which only goodness, and hence happiness, resides.

Then the Mediterranean flew by and we arrived in Port Said, where the cigarette manufacturer Simon Arzt delivered huge quantities of cigarettes on board, where the neighbourhood around the harbour was probably the most wicked and nefarious of all that I remember. At the time I had a lively friendship with a Dutch family, the Thomases. They had plantations near Batavia[76] and were returning from a yearlong stay in Europe. The highly musical couple had each taken music lessons in Leipzig. I can still hear the two of them singing, with her accompanying on the piano, *"Da schien es mir, als weinte auch der Heilige von Stein*." Those with musical training will probably know what it is, all I know is that it is unforgettable to me and that it captured me immediately. The Thomases had two children with them, a boy and a girl. We all grew as close as anyone could in such a short while. The children climbed all over me and were almost my shadow. Because we were not on duty much—we only had class and fencing and gymnastics—I could devote myself entirely to them.

It was becoming intolerably hot. One day in the Red Sea, I was developing my photographs in the comfortable darkroom of the ship. In the heat, the emulsion layer of the photographic plate melted and the memories that were captured on the plate dissolved to nothing.

In Bombay, a mysterious Indian man read my palm. He foretold that I would one day rule over many people. This was not difficult to foretell, considering that I was an officer, and high-ranking officers by necessity are in charge of the units that have been assigned to them. At the time I did not assume that I would rise so high in the military hierarchy that I would be addressed, as is common practice in Austria, as "*Exzellenz*." For us young boys, our superiors from field officer onward were fabulous beasts. In a witty mood one time when I was giving a speech at a table, I asked whether these fabulous animals should be counted as saints or demigods. As a field officer, I certainly was neither, but rather a patriot, an impeccably trained naval officer and an honour-loving soldier. Like all my comrades.

[76] T.N. The former Dutch East Indies, today' s Jakarta, Indonesia.

Chapter 13
Life in China

In Singapore, the marine luminescence was more beautiful than in any other place I have seen. Our rowboat glided through liquid gold. Then we headed north to our young colony of Tsingtao[77] and to Shanghai. I once more have in front of me a letter, dated January 20, 1902:

> *Still in Shanghai and still very merry. From the money I earned during the passage in the amount of around a hundred and thirty marks, I purchased a hunting gun of American origin, because German hunting guns were not available, unfortunately. This means that I have been going out a lot on the banks of the Yangtze with my comrades and shooting at pheasants, missing them time and again. Of course, I also recently brought one down. It was a wonderful golden pheasant, a feast for the eyes, and I regretted tearing this wonderous creation of God so senselessly from the blessedness and glory of its life. I have also been riding the small but powerful and tough ponies—I did so the other day just as darkness was setting in, for example. The lively animal darted off with me on its back and I was unable to contain it. I ended up a considerable distance away in an area that was unknown to me, strangely without capsizing and breaking my neck. It was a rather uncomfortable situation as the area is unsafe.*
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> *Another time I ended up with a nag that was blind in one eye. Because of this, he always veered to one side and at one point he got so close to a comrade who was riding next to me that my knee got stuck behind the saddle and I began slipping down from my horse. I implored all saints and gods to free me from this mortal danger. They indeed came to my aid, but I can say that I would rather pitch and toss in the most miserable boat in the worst weather than challenge fate again on the back of a one-eyed horse.*
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> *Shanghai has a very active social life. The German colony gravitates around the consul general Knappe, a very well-respected personality. The city also has a large racecourse, where, in the good part of the year, horse races are held. The bets placed on these races are, by European standards, unusually high. Lots of money is earned and it changes hands very often. In addition, there are many facilities for tennis, cricket, polo and golf. There is great luxury, with magnificent streets, like the Bund, with villas and multi-storey houses featuring beautiful gardens. The interior design of these*

[77] T.N. Spelled Tsingtau in German, Tsingtao or Qingdao is a major city of in China's Shandong province. After being occupied by German troops in 1897, it was the centre of the Kiautschou Bay concession, which lasted from 1898 to 1914, and was operated by the East Asia Squadron and the German Imperial Navy.

houses is quite uniform, all in the English style: a hall with a fireplace and comfortable English furniture. The bathrooms are splendid, and deserve mention insofar as there are only very short waterlines in the city, and thus coolies must carry in bathing water in buckets. And yet despite the great number of services one has to pay for, life for Europeans is most inexpensive. Chinese coolies are ridiculously cheap. The competition is too great, the local population too large. For very little cash, that is to say a nickel with a hole in it that the coolies wear around their necks, strung up on a chain, they work away the entire day. For a one-hour trip in a rickshaw, for example—that is the small, elegant, two-wheeled carriage that is pulled by a coolie – one pays fifteen cents, which is not even thirty pfennigs. Every hour after that is only ten cents. And they are always running at a trot; getting tired is something the coolies just don't seem to do.

For us greenhorns, being pulled by another human being gave us a terrible feeling at first. But you get used to it and no longer have feelings about it. That's the way human beings are. It was only through one deed that we tried to show our good heart: we gave the coolies a large tip, greatly overpaid them, in other words. But the coolies didn't have any understanding for this. They didn't interpret this as originating in human goodness, but in stupidity, and suddenly they demanded outrageous prices. And so our trips have usually ended in unpleasant haggling.

This cheapness of labour naturally results in inexpensive products. With respect to the food we receive, we are living like princes here. Every meal at noon and in the evening features soup, two meat courses with vegetables, dessert, fruit, coffee, tea and Seekuh.[78] *All of this onboard fare costs one mark fifty per day. Is this not a ridiculously low price according to our understanding? Given what little we spend of our food allowance, we are able to save lots of money and thus afford quite a few extra things. And with all that, our excellent cook, a Chinese man who sports a long pony tail, is still able to employ two helpers who do all the work. He is able, in other words, to get very good earnings out of his contract with us.*

The circumstances are similar with laundry. Each item, regardless of what it is, costs four cents, that is around eight pfennigs. The washing is impeccable, but the clothing soon gets worn out and we have to buy new clothes. We are in frequent contact with life on shore, especially with the officers' messes of the army units that are stationed in Shanghai. Recently we returned the gesture and were the hosts. Our guests, if not wearing uniforms, were in smoking suits. As the head of the mess, I had all the work. I had my hands full, but when it was all finished I could look upon my work with satisfaction. In the well-decorated room, the banquet table was

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[78] T.N. As mentioned in Part 3, Chapter 8, on his first trip across the Atlantic, this is part of breakfast and this "sea cow milk" would have likely referred to a mixture of a lot of water, little milk and *pimenta* (Brazilian pepper). Here, one wonders if "Seekuh" was also used to refer to liquor.

nicely set. Three batmen were the waiters and wore white parade uniforms. There was the following bill of fare: gardener's soup, goose liver pâté on buttered toast, cooked fish with butter sauce, roasted hare, pudding, fruit, coffee, cigarettes and spirits. It all went off without a hitch. Our good wine from our German homeland, French sparkling wine and the spirits enlivened the mood. Then came the high point: German draft beer that I had rustled up from a steamship from our homeland. All of this earned me a lot of recognition.

I have been corresponding actively with the Dutch friends we made during the crossing. The Thomas family from Batavia was simply so wonderful and the children so well-raised that they captured my heart. It seems the little ones feel the same way as I received a card written in the unpracticed handwriting of children not only for Christmas and New Year's but also a few days ago. This brings me great delight, and I have decided that, in two or three years, if I get to return home safe and sound, I will take a detour from Singapore to Batavia, where the family owns a plantation not far away. When we parted ways in Singapore and I was waving them goodbye with my handkerchief, I must admit that my eyes grew watery. It was like when I had to part company from you, that's how close I had become to the family. And that's what all Dutch people I know are like. A wonderful nation. Not only that, but in Batavia I can look up different naval officers who are stationed there—these are men I got to know during our visit to Den Helder two years ago, and I count some of them as my friends. So there certainly will be no lack of company.

In Sumatra, too, I made a traveling acquaintance. Miss de Lange, to whom I should also certainly pay a visit at some point, is planning to marry a merchant there soon. I would have enough time because once this posting is completed, I will have two months' leave. But what are plans, anyway? One officer who was one of our superiors at the naval academy last year, a capable officer and newly engaged, recently got an iron splinter in his eye when they were raising the anchor. Now he has a glass eye and his career has essentially been cut short.

I received your box with Christmas presents yesterday. Thank you very much for your gifts, but especially for your love and for thinking of me. Here in a foreign land, this has twice the positive effect on me. Sending all of you my heartfelt greetings.

It might seem strange that I'm emphasizing culinary delights so much. This is explained, however, by the fact that we now live in a time in which we live from calories instead of from butter and bacon. That is to say calories that are so meagrely allotted that one is always hungry. In times like these, one enjoys thinking back on times when one could eat whenever one was hungry and whatever one pleased.

For us Fähnrichs, a well-known and well-loved figure was soon the Chinese tailor Müller, or "Schnada [Schneider] Mülla." He delivered an entire smoking suit, silk inside and out, for all of ten dollars.

And these were Mexican dollars, massive silver coins, even bigger than our silver five-mark pieces from before the First World War. When you carried them loose in your pants pocket—which you did because no "China coast man" carried a wallet—they were so heavy that you were constantly pulling up your pants. Going by the exchange rates of the time, they were worth about half an American dollar, and so a Mexican dollar was worth about two Reichsmarks. How these heavy and old-fashioned coins became full legal tender in China I do not know. But coins in particular can sometimes have an especially long lifespan. For this reason, it is certainly remarkable that Maria Theresa Thalers[79] are a widely used coin in Africa to this day and were in circulation in Abyssinia until the Italian wars,[80] for example. When Schnada Mülla delivered his smoking suit, there was, as is customary in China, a great haggling about the price—the so-called squeeze, or bargaining for a discount. The prices are always inflated because the seller knows that the buyer will try to get a better price. But for us, the protracted negotiations soon became obnoxious, and at some point, one of us drew his long sabre—which, incidentally, was dull—held it to Schnada Mülla's beautiful ponytail, and declared that he would cut it off immediately if he did not give him a discount of a dollar. Because a Chinese man's honour was directly linked to his ponytail at the time, the tailor immediately gave in, and the deal was done. Both parties were satisfied and Schnada Mülla went on to make us many suits and coats without ever getting back at us for the harsh joke we had played on him. Footwear and suitcases, too, were excellent, actually any leather goods. Despite our low income as Fähnrichs, we were all soon fabulously equipped.

In the year that had gone by, the military and political events that had been set in motion by the murder of our envoy had quickly come to a head, involving the military instruments of power of all European states. Led by the German field marshal Graf von Waldersee, all Europeans fighting shoulder to shoulder had suppressed the Boxer Rebellion and restored order. But there was only an appearance of unity. A good ten years later, the Europeans got into a scrap with one another and with their narrowmindedness diminished the prestige of the white man. And when this process proved not to be thoroughgoing enough, they went ahead with the Second World War, whose disastrous consequences we are feeling now. And the bacon of the butchered pig of Germany is so rancid that the victors are not able to enjoy it.

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[79] C.D. The Maria Theresa thaler is a coin first minted in 1741, named after Maria Theresa, ruler of Austria, Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia. The coin is known for its longevity after being widely adopted across the German-speaking world and then used in the Middle East and Asia.

[80] T.N. The Italo-Ethiopian wars of 1887–1889 and 1895–1896.

We had sent considerable army units to China back then. But it was a disgrace how this first-class, choice army was dressed. To save money, no chic khaki uniforms were made, which are so becoming, nor were the soldiers given equally becoming sun helmets. Rather, the fatigue uniforms from the barracks square back home were soaked in some brown slop, and so our brave soldiers arrived wearing this garbage and their sweaty field caps, making a mockery of themselves in front of all the other nations and provoking indignation and deep shame in us. These were and are the reasons why we have been unpopular. An old and experienced leading nation like England found us to be snobs and upstarts who ruined the prices. And this was entirely true. These miserable circumstances were only rectified following the emphatic reports sent by the "World Marshal."[81] Suddenly the troops were picture-perfect in their new uniforms and the faces of all Europeans lit up.

This was cause for much celebration at the German Club. Everyone who was out there at the time looks back at this club with gratitude. Oh, how many bamboos were drunk at the bar there, a mixture of sherry and vermouth. Not to be forgotten here is the shot of angostura bitters, which helped with the chronic intestinal complaints escaped by practically no one along the Chinese coast. Angostura is an exceptional bitter cordial for the stomach. It is produced by the family or company Siegert in Trinidad, where I would later have a lovely, relaxed time, when sailing again in the Gulf of Mexico. I was told that the first West Indian Siegert was a former military doctor who, as fate would have it, wound up in the West Indies. Among the people he treated was an old Indian woman who gave him the recipe for the bitters, an old Indian secret. This was the seed from which grew an international company and one of the richest merchant families of the West Indies.

The German Club in Shanghai was the centre of German culture. Oh, how much decency, capability, and patriotism congregated there! The presence of the distinguished cruiser squadron—it had been increased to eight combat-ready ships—and the appearance of significant numbers of ground forces gave the community a new touch. I recall a wonderful party at the club at which—just like back home—a number of young ladies danced a minuet with the respective lieutenants, all in traditional attire. And then two young, engaged couples—because people were starting to get engaged at the time—danced to the latest hit song that went, "*Ringel Reihe Rosenbusch, ich tanz mit meiner Frau*." The two couples received an enthusiastic round of applause for their presentation and had to repeat it a few times.

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[81] T.N. "Weltmarschall" was a nickname given to Alfred von Waldersee, the commander-in-chief of the German units sent to China.

Oh, the contrasts in life! The next day I was out hunting with several comrades. Suddenly we heard terrible screaming. From in front of one of the unwieldy wooden boxes which stand alone on the fields and in which the wrapped corpse of a dead relative had been placed came the sounds of the professional mourners, perhaps also of female family members of the dead person, bewailing the death. The songs, sung in a high falsetto, sounded terrifying and ghastly to our European ears. Perhaps to Chinese ears they sound like the expression of the deepest human sympathy? Our mood had been derailed. We returned to our boat pensively and were quite quiet all evening.

Later we went from Shanghai to Tsingtao. At the time I never would have dreamt that I would find myself a spouse who was born in Shanghai and who spent many months of her life in Tsingtao. This was the place where her father, a great business man in China, donated a great festival hall, the Lieder Hall, to the colony and built two wonderful hotels at the beach, which soon made Tsingtao with its wonderful sandy beach and its favourable climate a very popular seaside destination in East Asia. At the local beach, my wife-to-be learned to swim, instructed by a petty officer of the cruiser squadron. The first time I went to Tsingtao, the German Leased Territory of Kiautschou Bay had been German controlled for only four years. These four years had been enough to turn a small and completely neglected Chinese fishing town into an attractive European settlement. The concession area was in every respect under the command of the navy, which was responsible financially, that is in a budgetary sense. This enabled leadership that was firm and consistent, and this was particularly advantageous because the responsible party was Admiral von Tirpitz, who was very skilled in administrative matters and was recognized for it by the German government. And so the concession area blossomed progressively, soon awakening the envy of some onlookers in the process.

At the heart of the town was a governor's building. That's where there were the administration buildings, too, along with a courthouse. The criminal justice system was interesting insofar as it adopted the Chinese forms of punishment—for example, those found guilty had to wear a wooden plate around their necks. Another punitive measure was publicly humiliating offenders by shackling them to a pole.

Particularly great efforts were made when it came to reforestation. The Chinese had completely clear-cut the forest, and the ensuing karstification was evident. After just a few short years, that is during the time I was there, the young forests became green again, mostly with coniferous trees but also mountain ash, for example. This gave the territory a completely different character.

The harbour was developed and repair stations and docks for the ships of the cruiser squadron were built. The roads in the harbour

were superbly well-suited to squadron drills such as maneuvering exercises and shooting practice. Strong fortifications were built which later made life difficult for the Japanese when they were conquering Tsingtao. Whole streets lined with modern European villas were created, as well as schools and colleges for the children of the colony, though increasingly, Chinese children attended them as well. A feeling of security and comfort grew in the colony. Large Chinese trading companies moved to the German territory of Tsingtao, but also well-known German and English companies established branches there. The Norddeutscher Lloyd steamships regularly put into Tsingtao, meaning that a direct connection to our homeland was established, operated at a regular two-week interval. Towering above it all were the jagged peaks of the Laushan mountains, which challenged even practiced mountain climbers. The German-Austrian mountaineering club built huts in the Laushan mountains, just like back home, and they contained everything that was needed for repose. This allowed a lot of climbing to happen.

In the winter, the climate is ice-cold. Everything is covered in snow. But in the summer it is too warm. Tsingtao is located at a latitude of about 35 degrees, that is about at the same latitude as North Africa. So, for us, Tsingtao was like a new home, and in the coming years we would make our way back there time and again after we'd criss-crossed the globe. The mention of the administration of the leased territory, which was tight and brought many blessings, reminds me of a story that comrades from Austrian ships told us. Like us, they were stationed in East Asia and we ran into them again and again, forming very close and warm ties. In the Austrian defence forces there was once a well-known general called Galgozin. He was Croatian and was just as traditional a personality as General Wrangel in Berlin. Galgozin was posted in Dalmatia. For the building of bridges and roads, he was allotted the sum of 500,000 crowns. When the work had been completed, the audit office in Vienna asked him for a statement of account. He issued it in the following form: "Five hundred thousand crowns received, five hundred thousand crowns spent on bridges and roads. Galgozin." The audit office was not satisfied with this and asked for receipts and a full statement of account. In reply, Galgozin wrote: "Five hundred thousand received, five hundred thousand spent. Whoever does not believe this is an ass. Galgozin." Burning with rage, the general director went to Emperor Franz and complained, showing him the answer. Emperor Franz read the message a number of times and then, looking up to the general director over his pince-nez, said laconically, "I believe him."

Such short and laconic responses are always effective. After the birth of each of my four sons, a very curious and somewhat pushy acquaintance of ours would bend over the cradle and thoroughly check the baby's eyes, ears, nose, chin and hair. Then she would ask,

"Where did he get that?" and I, modestly, would reply "From his mother" or "From his father" depending on the case. Eventually, with my youngest son, it got to be too much for me and when the question I was nervously awaiting was asked, I replied flippantly, "Oh, I don't know either." As if stung by a tarantula, the curious woman flew into a temper and started to leave the room, saying indignantly, "But that's just something you should know!" And so I was finally rid of the pesky woman, albeit having lost a bit of prestige.

In the springtime we sailed north to the Taku roadstead. Soon, the first train would be running again from the Taku roadstead to Beijing via Tianjin. The battles had died down, and the railroad line, which had been damaged, was being repaired. From back home, new cipher books had arrived for all German offices. I was charged with personally delivering the books destined for the legation in Beijing. The Taku roadstead was largely flat, giving you the impression that you were anchoring on the open sea. Peering at the horizon, you saw a narrow strip that is the coast. Most of the time there was a strong breaker. It was impossible to go to and from the shore in the small ship's boats. Large tugboats came alongside once a day to facilitate provisioning and the possibility of going ashore. One moment, the tugboat was at the level of the ship's superstructures, the next it would sink down low with the outgoing wave. The moment at which it was at the same level therefore had to be decisively seized. The goods would go flying this way and that, and in such moments, people also jumped over into the arms of the tugboat's sailors. Some were severely injured doing this. I found my way ashore painstakingly in this manner, but this made it all the more interesting.

Everywhere on land there were the signs of recent battle and hostile Chinese eyes looked upon me. Walls blackened by smoke. Train stations and railway systems that had been destroyed. Everywhere there were the militaries of the European powers, their rifles loaded and cocked. My suitcase with the important and top-secret cipher keys felt like a very unsettling object to be taking with me on my trip. I had to spend the night in Tianjin. I was provided with good accommodation by the German army unit there and was relieved of my precious burden, which they safely stowed away. A large dinner was held that evening. Sitting next to me was a Chinese Mandarin whose hat had a button and a peacock feather. We spoke English. Suddenly I heard him say loud and clear in German, "WD—will do!" This was a catchphrase in Berlin at the time. As it turned out, he spoke German fluently and had a wife who was from Berlin. When I asked where his spouse was sitting—there were some Europeans at the table—he explained that she was with his other wives at home in the

yamen,[82] which she could not leave. I was shocked. This unlucky woman; what a bind she was in! How irresponsible to allow yourself to end up in such a situation.

Then I arrived in Beijing, where I was met by two legation guards. Still today I can see in my mind's eye the massive city walls and large gates with dragon emblems and curved roofs. Signs of battle could still be seen everywhere. But life was moving on. I spent several interesting days at the legation. The new envoy, Excellence von Mumm was utterly kind and I soon had a good rapport with his staff. I would return to Beijing several times, but this first visit left the deepest impression. We rode the following day to the summer palace, which had suffered severe damage from the battles. Almost all of the delightful faience on the walls had been deliberately smashed by the conquerors with no sense for the artistic beauty and still less for the irreplaceable value. The fabulously entrancing miniature ponds, bridges and weeping willows stirred my soul, but so too did the reports I heard about the schemes and plots at the court of the decadent Chinese emperor and about the emperor's wire-pulling mother. Here in this enchanting setting, it was almost palpable to me how, yet again, people with their lowly instincts had dragged the sublime down and made it common. For me it was almost like an exhibition at a museum, something like at the Tower of London with its barbaric memories. Gone was also the time during which the emperor, the Son of Heaven, stooped before the deities once a year on the large round stone surface made of joined ashlar blocks and begged for mercy. Weeds were already poking through the cracks between the stones. Today the weeds must be growing wild. How transitory is human work! And—even in this empire with its four hundred million inhabitants—the end is near when the spirit, the driving force, the willingness to sacrifice is lacking. If that happens something new will necessarily come forth. New powers will take the lead, and what is old will break. Those were the thoughts that filled my mind.

We rode on. At some point we arrived in the mountains and came to the "Temple of Nephrite-Green Clouds." It was a magnificent experience to look down into the valley and from this calming solitude bring some order to those earlier impressions. Further decline would inevitably befall this place, but beneath the ruins there were many powers capable of rebuilding. The people are so tough, so hard and of so few wants that they will always find a way of prevailing. But there will be legions of victims! We had already observed on the Yangtze river just how little a human life is worth. It was not a rare thing to see a human corpse floating by in the gurgling current, a life

[82] T.N. The administrative office or residence of a local bureaucrat or mandarin in imperial China.

that had expired somewhere and somehow—perhaps on one of the Flower Boats—and no one cared two hoots about it.

The Flower Boats form a colony of houseboats, moored to one another by the hundreds, on which unfold the lives of the inhabitants from birth to death, with families fed primarily by girls decorated with flowers who give themselves away. These sampans rove everywhere—houseboats on which the whole family lives, moved with incredible skill by the father of the family using an oar. It is completely impossible to exercise control over the whereabouts of these boats, over the residents and their health. With little nets attached to bamboo sticks, they pull out anything and everything that floats by on the river and lay it down on deck. If it can in any way be used or eaten, they keep it. These poor people will eat anything. It is only amazing that they are not completely ravaged by epidemics. How often I observed as a watch officer when we were in the harbour how sampans wrangled over the spot next to our scuppers. They would string nets under them and everything that fell down—leftovers from our meals along with feces from our lavatories, dirty and oily bilge water—was sorted. The leftovers were then rinsed in the dirty yellow water of the harbour or the river, laid in the sun and eventually eaten.

Given this, it hardly seems surprising that rats are a popular item on the menu of the street food vendors in the Chinese neighbourhoods. Hanging as enticement in every grocer's shop are disemboweled rats, just like our pigs, with all four limbs splayed out. In the large cauldrons at any corner of the neighbourhood, the street food dishes would be bubbling away, which is to say that a mass would be cooking as I saw many times, whose colour was highly unappetizing to us Europeans: often greenish-reddish, almost a bishop's purple. We were generally discouraged from going to the Chinese neighbourhoods. In any case we were only allowed to go if there was a group of us. Too much happened and I always had the feeling that my life was not safe there, that you had to watch out at all times. But alongside the attraction of the foreignness and differentness of it all, we were compelled by the people with their unusual lifestyle; the dressed-up girls behind curtains, thus removed from curious glances, who flitted by on sedan chairs that were carried noiselessly; the narrow alleys in which no ray of light entered; the advertising signs in garish colours that hung down; and finally, the shops. There was so much that could be purchased for so little! All of it made by hand. At the time, it was not viable or competitive to do machine work in this region, and such intricate, individual work was done here. The ivory carver produced filigree work. It would have taken him months, even years to complete one piece. And next to him would be someone creating wonderful cloisonné vases, using a tweezer to insert the tiny pieces. A colourful, shimmering powder

was ground from the feathers of the kingfisher, and this was put, for example, on silver cufflinks between the characters of the Chinese script, which stood for good luck. In this way, these characters stood out distinctly against the colourful, darker background and were a wonderful ornament. The silversmiths in general had mastered their craft. We have beautiful chrysanthemum and bamboo-patterned silver fingerbowls that you feel drawn to look at again and again, delighting in them.

In no time it would be getting dark and time to return to the European settlements, which were fortified with barbed wire and guarded by men behind barricades, their guns loaded with live ammunition. One has to remember that there had just been a war with all Europeans and the Boxer movement still had a strong resonance with the Chinese population. This population, incidentally, is not homogenous. In the north there are the Manchu people, the warrior and conqueror class coming from the steppes. They are large, soldier-like figures with good posture. In contrast there are the southern Chinese, small, yellow, limber in their movements and so deferential they are almost submissive; their character is unreliable. But these Chinese people from the south, who dwelled in warmer and hotter areas, had already swallowed up the Manchus. The conquerors assimilated themselves to their inferiors, who had ultimately won the race from a historical point of view. To the European mind, all of this is uncanny and mysterious.

This impression grew stronger when we visited Hong Kong, Amoy,[83] Fuzhou and Nimrod Bay. Here it was hot. Here there were no Manchus, only yellow people, masses of them to the point of being overwhelming. God help us white people should ever this wave of people, emboldened by a unifying rallying cry set themselves against us. This current would submerge all western culture without mercy, and we would experience the downfall of the West first hand. This could happen especially now that we are so at odds with ourselves after the Second World War, and we are so devoid of any rousing idea that we could use in the fight against this. It seems to me as if we have all become senile, and yet I haven't given up the hope that young forces will be stirred to life that will help turn the tables toward the good and secure our continued existence.

Hong Kong was enchanting. My instant impression when I think of it is flowers and more flowers. Roses of a magnificence that can hardly be matched anywhere in the world. The permeating scent of the tuberoses above all. There were large and rich German trading houses whose hospitable and luxurious private residences we enjoyed visiting. All over the Chinese coast, German merchants had established their businesses and captured crucial positions for

[83] T.N. Today known as Xiamen.

themselves. Now, all of this is long in the past. Whether these positions can once more be captured is a matter of life and death for our people. I am utterly convinced that if the current societal order does not collapse under the onslaught of Asia, we will be able to win back these positions whose recapture is currently being prevented by the power of the victors. In the long term, our abilities cannot be rendered ineffective by force.

Then it was on to Nimrod Bay. Something as beautiful as this you only see once in a lifetime. The bay is cut deep into the land. We sailed almost all day to go all the way in and find our anchorage. And as far as the eye could see, the mountainous shore was covered with blooming azaleas. They glowed at us in every colour—white, pink, red and even sometimes yellow I believe. After we had anchored, we went ashore and it was as if we were in a fairy tale. The eye could hardly drink all that its lashes held. During the lay days, we adorned our ship with multitudes of blossoming branches, only to have to take new ones the next day because the blossoms wilted so quickly in the great heat. As the name suggests, this bay was also an eldorado for hunters. There were endless flocks of wild geese and ducks. We shot many of these birds and our plates were always full.

The impressions the Far East was making on us were so diverse and bizarre that we began to change. We became a part of this giant empire; its habits and customs coloured off on us and the concept of time faded. Why the European hurriedness and keenness? We felt the process of assimilation unfolding within us and hardly fought off the poison anymore—because, for the European, it is a poison. As we realized, with a shrug, we were "completely meshuga."

And so it was good when we departed from this sleepy part of southern China, and we were happy that we were headed straight for the northern part of the coast. We made a stopover in Tsingtao to do repairs, take provisions aboard and to do our exercises. Back in this city, we again felt the charisma of our homeland and came back to our senses somewhat. Shooting practice and daytime and nighttime squadron exercises returned us to the soldier's life and banished the infection of the "glamour of the East" from our heads.

Chapter 14
Korea and Japan

Photo from Theophil's collection of SMS Stosch *at dock in an unknown harbour.*

It was September. A telegram brought news of our promotion to ensign. At the same time, I was appointed to the staff of the second admiral, Count B., to whom I would feel deeply devoted my entire life. To belong to the staff of an admiral was a distinction and carried with it a certain status. Still today, I recall the kind and fatherly face of the count when I reported to him. If I had had to sacrifice myself for someone else, I would have done so for him without hesitation—but this never became necessary. He always had my back, which I found very moving, and he always supported me. That day, he was likely able to put himself in my position and I feel he knew how I felt. He told me that I could sail with his beautiful gig, and this was the most wonderful thing I could be offered. My comrades were celebrating in the mess hall. And so I had some peace and quiet in which to think about my situation. I spent the whole afternoon bobbing about in the gig with two passengers, and the spacious outer bay of Tsingtao offered plenty of room to do so. Now I was an officer, that is to say a man who must place his responsibilities, his *officium*, before all else. The greatness of this realization began to sink in and with the best resolve I faced my life's work, and I can say that throughout my life I always tried to faithfully turn these intentions into deeds.

Similar feelings most certainly filled my second-eldest son, who fell in the Second World War. Occasioned by the same promotion, he wrote through the army postal service, "You'll be amazed and you'll laugh, because I am now a lieutenant." Through his death he demonstrated the depth of this chivalrous feeling, this pride in belonging to a class that invests worth in spotless behaviour. As a twenty-year-old ensign who was hungry for life, he gave up his life jacket to subordinates when his vessel went down, dying a noble death. Who would dare deride a caste that produced such men? Here there was the willingness to sacrifice oneself for an idea, and perhaps, after our old officer corps has been destroyed and defamed, people will one day search ruefully for the shards with a magnifying glass and try to piece them back together.

In the evening I went to sleep in the room that had been assigned to me and the other freshly appointed lieutenants, to sleep in the bunk that had been allotted to me. The time of hammocks, which had served us as beds for three years, was now definitively over.

Then we headed northward, to Dalniy[84] and Vladivostok, the two Russian Imperial ports. There we found colossal quays and shipyards and strongholds. Everywhere you could see how building funds had suddenly run dry: half-finished construction stood in wait for the new budget. The funds had made their way into the pockets of unfaithful officials and officers. I still recall how, during an orgy of alcohol on one of the ships that later fell to the Japanese without a whimper early in the war against them, a higher-ranked Russian officer pulled a large wad of bills out of his pocket, threw it on the table and ordered enough alcohol to make everyone drunk out of their senses. Petty officers were roused from their slumber and forced to perform Russian dances without cease, most of them ending up in a squatting position, spinning like tops. Chinese rickshaw coolies who were still huffing and puffing from their effort as they asked for payment received a kick and fell head over heels into the ditch. I can still see how one coolie's eyes flared; after the defeat of Russia he certainly would have gotten revenge.

It was revolting. It seemed obvious to all of us that this regime was ripe for downfall. But for all this, the Russians had an obvious affection for us and counted us as friends and future allies. The officer corps did not lack a certain chivalrous sensibility, yet everything was dirtied and sullied by their untamed passions and immeasurable corruption. Because the character of a nation does not change quickly and because Bolshevism has only deepened the servile attitude of Russians, I am convinced that the country will not be able to swallow Europe up in the long term.

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[84] T.N. The port city of Dalian, under the territorial control of the Russian Empire from 1898 to 1905.

In Dalniy and Vladivostok, the difference between the English and the very similar German colonies on the one hand and the Russian colonies on the other became very apparent. In the English and German colonies there was order, cleanliness and justice. Nowhere in the world have I become aware of any irregularities in English holdings. Order prevails. Only once was this image sullied. At the Savoy Hotel in Alexandria, I was dancing with an Englishwoman. We danced past another couple, and the man was wearing the gold-embroidered uniform of the English-Egyptian troops, a red dinner jacket. My dancing partner whispered to me, "I believe he is no gentleman." Shortly afterwards, I heard that he had been arrested. He had engaged in irregularities when filling vacancies. But that is the only case.

Many years later I had a longstanding friendly relationship with an official from the English-Indian forest service. When I asked him whether everything in this administration was clean, he affirmed that it was but made one qualification. This sign of internal health on the part of the white race further corroborates my claim that Europe is not yet ripe for downfall.

In Dalniy and Vladivostok, too, there were large German trading houses, for example Kunz & Albers, which enjoyed boundless respect and had a significant influence on the economic life. They too have been destroyed. Everywhere, the Germans have been beaten and condemned. But they are essentially indispensable; they will have to be allowed to work again. And once the German has the horse again, he will know how to ride it. Our most important task here is to convince our neighbours that we feel ourselves to be European and that we want to integrate ourselves into the European community without ulterior motives.

One day a long, coded telegram arrived. It was up to me to decipher it. It announced the upcoming arrival of Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria and the crown princess. The second admiral was to be in charge of looking after these important visitors. And so we had to go to Shanghai to receive the guests. I was charged with making preparations, an extensive task as the goal was to allow the prince to gain as many impressions as possible and, by showing him the surroundings and acquainting him with many important international offices and individuals, to give him insight into the general situation and into the criss-crossing interests and forces at work. This was then achieved over the course of the visit, which lasted several weeks, and we may safely assume that the effects were beneficial.

Everything went very well except for one failing on my part. After their arrival on board, and after the whole ceremony involving endless salutes for all high-ranking guests—admirals, generals, consul-generals, and high officials of the Chinese government—who were paying His Royal Highness a visit, we were all sitting in the admiral's

cabin having dinner. The prince asked for salt. I had been responsible for setting the table and although I had gone over everything carefully, I had not noticed that the salt was missing. With a friendly smile, the prince gently tugged on my hair and informed me that in every nation salt is a sign of hospitality and must not be absent at the table to which guests were invited. I carefully made note of this and later whenever I was responsible for laying a table, or when we hosted some of our many dear guests in my own house, which we did often, I always paid attention to the salt pig. Now that some of our possessions have been lost as a result of the war, including the small saltcellars and shakers, a large sugar shaker which was not lost stands on the table as a symbol of the hospitality we love to extend to guests when we share the calories granted to us at the markets.

It is decades later and I have recently had the opportunity to visit the Prince in his Leutstätten Palace on Lake Starnberg. During our conversation I reminded him of this anecdote and of a few things from the First World War, when he was Commander-in-Chief of the North Front in the west and my highest superior when I was stationed in Zeebrugge, Flanders with my flotilla. He remembered about the salt and couldn't believe that this young sprig of a lieutenant had turned into a white-haired general. One does not notice how one is growing older, or does not want to face the truth that there are only a few measly grains of sand left in the hourglass, and that they too are slowly making their way down.

Following this royal visit, the much-awaited moment came for us young people when it was time to head for Korea and Japan. This was the dream of all those who travelled in East Asia. We put into harbour in Busan, Korea. There, things were again different from any other place that we had seen out there. The men here had such an unusual appearance. Although it was very hot, they went around in dark clothing; I seem to recall that they all wore a kind of black cloak. But the strangest thing of all was their headdress: these were hats woven from horsehair that were not worn snuggly on the head, but rather the brim that protected the wearer from the sun was half a palm's width above the head, and connecting to it was a high conical top. Under the brim was matting that rested on the person's head, more or less as if you folded out the sweatband that we have on the inside of our hats and put the hat on like that. This seemed downright bizarre to us, especially since the men here seemed to be so full of dignity that they practically tripped over their own feet.

The emperor of Korea invited the better part of the officer corps to Seoul to have dinner at his estate, and so I experienced something that very few do: a glimpse of the courtly life of an Asian ruler. The admiral, in whose wake I travelled, was introduced to His Majesty by the minister resident. The manner of dress, the rooms and the furnishings at the royal palace were all very dignified, and to us the

whole apparatus of the royal household and the stiff ceremonial nature of the proceedings seemed entirely appropriate. The admiral gave his greetings and passed on a handwritten letter from our emperor. After a short while, we were graciously dismissed, but not without His Imperial Majesty asking to be excused for dinner and inviting us to an evening performance of his ballet afterwards. We were on our own for dinner, in other words. The Korean participants did not speak any German. The food and drink were excellent and the mood was most certainly elevated.

Our resident minister was a bachelor and surprisingly open in the way he communicated about every aspect of human existence. The following story was told about him to great laughter. When our squadron chief once visited and was given a similar reception, he brought with him his wife, who came on the squadron's coal ship, the Titania, from Shanghai. She was a bossy-boots and felt personally responsible for the respectability and moral conduct of the officer corps. She could not have been more unpopular. Thus, the general desire was that she be dispensed with during the visit in Seoul as soon and as permanently as possible. The understanding and humorous minister committed himself to this task with skill and devotion. Sitting next to the admiral's wife, he leaned over to the man sitting on his other side and said in a voice so loud that everyone around him could easily hear: "Tell me, do you know Mr. X in Hong Kong? I have heard that the poor man has got such a bad case of bladder stones that when he gets up in the night to relieve himself the bladder stones make a pinging sound!" The admiral's wife soon rose from the table, excused herself, and was not seen again.

Her husband the admiral, our squadron chief whom we had experienced briefly as our highest superior, was likewise a unique character. He had a long beard that went down to his chest. This made it seem as if he was actually provoking us young lieutenants who had to be clean-shaven or at most could sport a small goatee. Which of his characteristics had earned him his high-ranking position I could not say. I suspect he owed it to certain merits at the green table in the Imperial Navy Office in Berlin or with the Admiralty Staff. But these should not be the criteria for choosing commanders of front-line troops, especially of cruisers, who have to be personalities, like Seydlitz in the time of Frederick the Great, who are idolized by the entire crew.

Once, thorough inspections were being carried out: a Fähnrich approaches with his group and gives the admiral a piece of paper with a note written in curlicued letters detailing all the subjects the Fähnrich had taught his group. The admiral chooses an instruction and says to the Fähnrich: "Why don't you instruct about the orphanage?" The Fähnrich grows pale and explains that he has never instructed about the orphans' house. "But dear Fähnrich, this topic is

right here on the paper." The Fähnrich blushes and answers, "This is supposed to say the *imperial* house." Without batting an eyelash, the admiral then says, his voice deep with indifference, "Sure, why not then, instruct about the imperial house."

This indifference, illustrated here, toward something we honored so deeply, namely the imperial house, shocked us back then. Such outliers were rare but they help explain the disaster that came later. Numbering among these men was also our first officer at the time. Just a few years later, as a retired man, he was a fiery agitator against the emperor's regime and belonged to the circle of people led by Maximilian Harden with his journal *Die Zukunft* (*The Future*), which did everything it could to drag the emperor through the mud. All of this made us young officers aware that in spite of the outward harmony, not everything was homogenous and smooth in our fatherland. Under the clever leadership of our second admiral, we further reflected on social and constitutional problems. And our experiences in the Russian ports played their part as well. In my memories of Japan, the concluding observations I made there are significant: "Considerable revolutionary and communist tendencies in Japan cannot be overlooked."

After the exceptional meal at the emperor's table in Seoul, we were led to a platform out in the open that was covered with large, smooth paving stones that reflected the moonlight. How miserable and undignified our dancefloors seem by comparison, the ones one sees in every better venue in Europe, with the couples slow-dancing across it cheek to cheek, their faces lost in reverie. If anyone were ever to see a dance like the one that was offered to us in the next hour, he would feel that we have—I am tempted to say—almost lost our dignity and taste. This dance in Seoul was a divinization of the female dancers, who captured our imagination, creating art that was like a church service, generally as a chorus comprised of many but also as individual dancers performing alone. With deep devotion to their exalted task, they gave us an unforgettably delightful experience. If anyone had expected erotic stimulation, this lower instinct was extinguished after a few minutes and that which is good and noble was brought to life in us spectators. This language of the hands, these lovely faces and movements of arms and bodies bespoke a culture and a training that is perhaps akin to the temple dances of the Egyptians and the sects of ancient Rome but has become lost to us modern Europeans. Captivated, we returned to our sleeping quarters. Once again, we had been captured by the "glamour of the East," which conquered a part of our hearts. Slowly, we began to be lost to the West.

A conversation with Japanese naval officers after the First World War is particularly telling in this respect. We were speaking about our eldest son, who was about fourteen years old. Because they had

studied naval battle history, the Japanese men had arrived at the conclusion that I had been a capable torpedo boat operator. For this reason, they were interested in my son. They suggested that they take him to Japan with them and train him in their navy. Considering the conditions in our defeated fatherland and my hard-pressed financial situation, it was a tempting offer. I asked for two years' time so that our son could complete his schooling at a somewhat accelerated pace, which I hoped to push through as an exception. As an answer I received a slight smile and a polite rejection. It was either right away or not at all—otherwise he could not be remodeled as an Asian. His current age was the upper limit. If we had accepted the seductive offer, it would have cost us our dear son.[85] And this was too great a sacrifice. The Medusa-face of Asia was staring at us. Under the polite and mannerly outer skin lies a curious mystery which we Europeans cannot solve, and which will never be unveiled to us. The line between the Western and Eastern mentality is very definite. Bridges cannot cross it. Recently, I grasped the sleeves of an English staff officer I came to know to emphasize my point, and I said to him in the deepest state of agitation:

> *Don't you know that the Bolshevik is an Asian and thinks and acts as such? Everything that he does comes from a different mentality and in all circumstances the end justifies the means for him. No signature, no promise and no handshake is binding for the Bolshevik if something he wants to do fits into his worldview. European principles and practices are for him unbinding and invalid concerns.*

I heard that the Englishman went to his people in the evening, shaking his head and saying, "A German general told me stories about Asians and Bolsheviks that really unsettled me. I can hardly imagine that he's right, this German general."

An anecdote might fit in well here, which has to do with a teacher[86] from England years ago. Following the First World War, he had belonged to an English amateur acting troupe that performed Shakespearean plays in Germany. English-speaking families were asked to house these actors, and this is how he came to stay with us for a good week. He became good friends not only with us but with our sons. There was great excitement when he used one of our bicycles for the first time one day. The freewheel was unknown to the Englishman, and this lack of knowledge almost caused him to capsize. In the evening our family was sitting together and we urged him to tell us about England and his family. When he was leaving for

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[85] C.D. The son he speaks of here is my father, Werner. I find the idea of this shocking, but perhaps the fact that Theophil even considered it speaks to the conditions in Germany after WWI.

[86] T.N. An illegible note in the margin here on manuscript page 103 might say that he was something else.

Germany, his little son had demanded to know everything about his trip. What was his father doing? Theatre. What role would he be playing? The fool. Full of enthusiasm and conviction, the little boy had answered, "Oh Father, I am sure you will be a very good fool."

And now it was on to Japan. When I think of this time, it warms my heart. Dear God, how much beauty you have bestowed upon us. We entered the inland sea at night, headed for Yokohama. The narrow channel was teeming with fishing boats. Suddenly our ship was jolted. We had come up against one of them, a large sea-worthy vessel, with our stem. The watch officer hadn't cleared it. The conditions were as they always are in such situations. With the aft searchlight, we found the sinking vessel astern in our wake. Our rescue boats flew to it like hawks and rescued everyone who was aboard as well as some valuable items. The damage was generously covered by the German empire. This was the beginning of the dream we were looking forward to. Later, we often traveled along this same route, but we were spared a similar accident on other occasions with different watch officers.

After stopping briefly in Yokohama, we put into port at the small, nearby town of Uraga, where we could make use of the wonderful facilities of the Japanese navy to completely overhaul our ship. And so, for four weeks, Uraga was our home. All through the town, people accommodated us with great kindness—indeed cordiality—and we felt entirely at home.

We had a lot of free time, and so we climbed with a small netted hammock up the hillsides and lay down up there in hammocks that were strung between trees. We swung quietly. From below came the sounds of the shipyard and the little town. In front of us was the blue bay of Yokohama below. From far away came the smoke clouds of ships, which must have come from all around the world, and here and there were the great white canvas mountains of mighty tall ships. Under our hammocks, the white lilies of Japan bloomed in extravagant magnificence. How beautiful and fabulous it all was. In the evening, there were the whistling sounds of the blind masseurs who were going to their customers or advertising their services. Is it not a sign of the most refined human sensibility to have massage performed by blind people? How coarse we Europeans seem by comparison.

Personal hygiene is valued highly by the Japanese. Every house has a rain barrel out in front. It is always being replenished with fresh water if there is not enough rain water. The sweat-soaked rickshaw coolie, standing as God has made him, helps himself to bucketfuls of cool water and pours it on himself, which not only cools him down but also takes away the sweat. He puts on fresh blue linen trousers and a jacket and only then does he move on to the square, clean and nice to look at, to wait for his next job.

Every house also offers a wonderful bathing facility. There is a small pool with very hot water. First you rinse off your sleep and sweat with buckets of cold water, and then everyone, men and women alike, get into the almost unbearably hot water entirely naked. No one considers this indecent and no one would understand if you did not behave properly. After the hot bath, you rub yourself thoroughly with a raffia brush, then you soap up with lovely Japanese soap that smells wonderfully of sandalwood. To complete the bath, you receive another few bucketfuls of cold water over your head. After such treatment, you feel like you've been reborn.

People mostly sleep in a padded sleeping bag on mats on the floor. Though everything is very clean, it can't be helped that sometimes a flea gets into your sleeping bag. For this reason, it is all the more liberating to go through the morning cleaning routine. We often watched how the Japanese woman makes herself clean and beautiful. It is a long ceremony. I have seen images of ancient Egyptian queens who lie dead in their sarcophagi. In that world, the art of the morning toilette was very refined, and only very rich and cultivated women could afford it. But in Japan, care for the female body is universal. Even the poorest women beautify themselves for the men, following the deep-seated female instinct. From toenails to fingernails, from the cared-for mouth and teeth, from powder to lipstick, from plucked eyebrows to artful hairstyles—everything is carefully tended to to please the man. After all, this is the task of the woman. And then there is the colourful clothing. Floral patterns, and over the hips the wide obi, and then all that is left to do is get into the getas—their footwear—and voilà, the Japanese woman is complete. She is then truly as her name says: like an apricot blossom, a gift of God.

During my years out there, I got to know many parts of the Japanese islands. It was always the same. In the very small fishing villages where we anchored for a few days, we liked to go ashore wearing kimonos. It felt natural. We became more and more captivated. We were also able to make a little conversation now. And so we increasingly came to love the beautiful land and its people. I believe we went ashore in Hiroshima—I could be mistaken about the name—the holy island. Some ten metres from the coast we had to go into the water because the water at the beach was too shallow for us to approach. At the edge of the bank, tame deer were waiting for us. With absolute trust, they thrust their muzzles into our pockets to pull out crusts of bread. On this holy island, all animals lived as if in the garden of Eden before the Fall. Nothing harmed them and so there was no fear and no hate. It was like nothing else I have seen. *Hic habitat felicitas!* [Here lives happiness!]

In Hakodate in the north—where it is ice-cold in the winter, while the southern parts of the islands are tropical—I had to

participate in a Japanese trial to defend two of our sailors who had charges brought against them. In a state of drunkenness, they had smashed a beer bottle over a Japanese man's head and the injured man barely came away with his life. The judges wore black gowns with a high bonnet like a Phrygian hat. The entire proceedings were professional and distinguished in nature. The deserved punishment was two years of labour, mending nets. The fear that was evident upon the faces of the delinquents when they were removed could be seen as their just punishment, because they had greatly damaged the reputation of the white man.

My years of unusual impressions came to an end with a trip lasting several days with my esteemed admiral. It was the time of the cherry blossoms. The whole country was shrouded in white and everyone celebrated the divine beauty. In old temples, we beheld dreams of gold and lacquer. Bronze bells tolled by hand murmured their applause, and the Buddha of Kamakura sat enthroned above us and above the celebrating people, a Mona Lisa smile on his lips. When we were descending the hundred steps of one temple, a young student caught up with us, and, believing he had Englishmen in front of him, took the opportunity to enhance his education by engaging in a conversation. What did he say? "Napoleon, was he not a great hero?"[87]

The hunger for education there is great, and the energy to work cannot be surpassed. Thus the East, the closer it comes in contact with the West, will increase its scientific achievements they will become our equals and competitors. There is only one thing in this process that we Europeans, too, should petition for in our hope for a favourable destiny, namely that this happy people not lose their soul in the transition. If they part company with their thousand-year-old tradition, turning away from honouring their ancestors and from their cult of the beautiful and sublime, then they will lose their essential foothold and fall victim to every seduction. Already Americanization is happening. Large industrial companies like Mitsui Bishi[88] are concentrating workers in large numbers, as we do, creating a proletariat in the process. Already there are strikes and riotous assemblies of incited masses, which threaten to disrupt social order and to enthrone new gods. Such a development is certainly not in the interest of Europe. Because at that point there is the danger that these hundreds of millions of East Asians will one day march off against us and overrun us with their numerical superiority. Because of this, our enjoyment of all the gifts that we received in the East had a bitter aftertaste.

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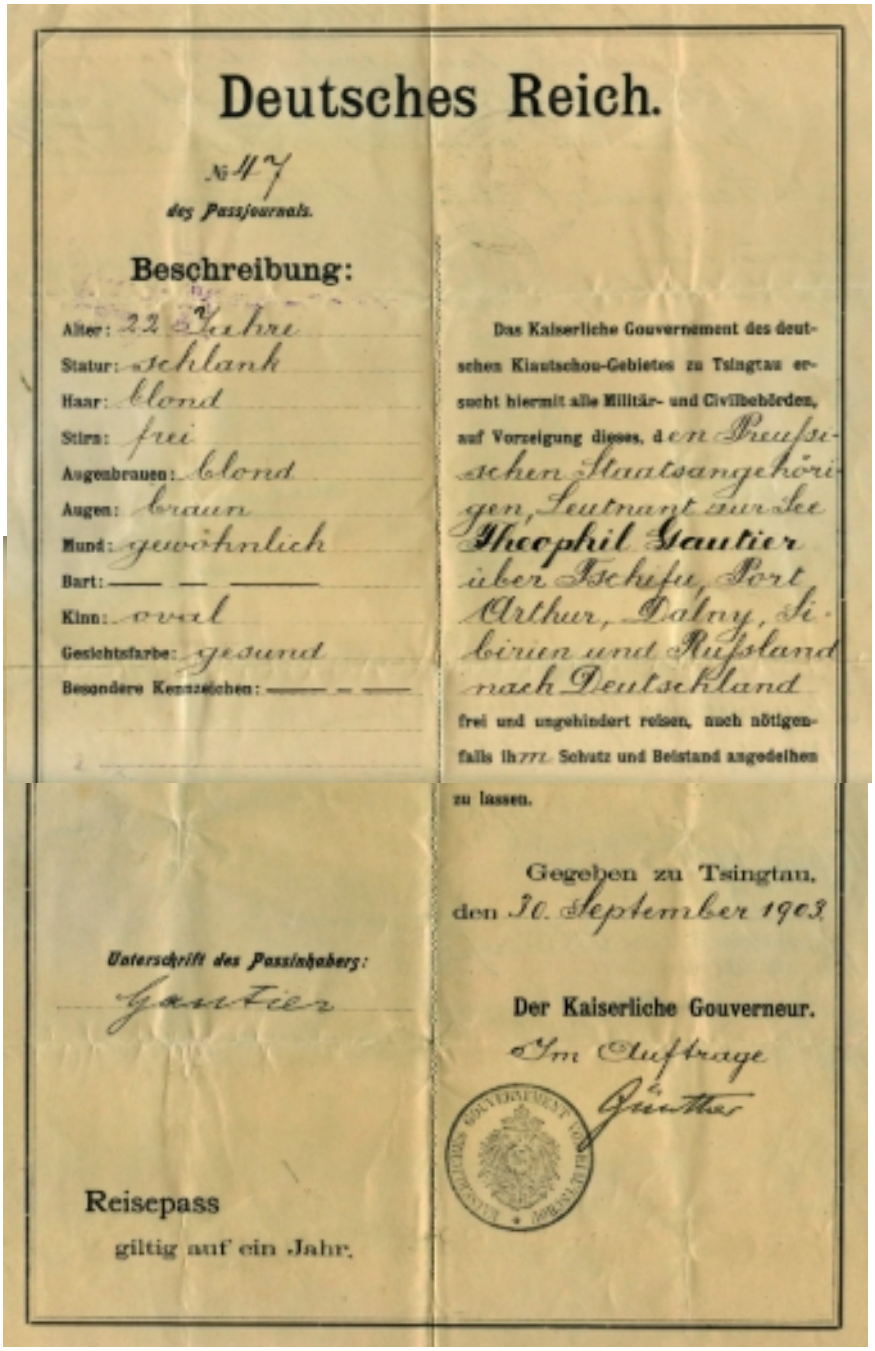
[87] T.N. In English.

[88] T.N. T.G's spelling.

I concluded my memoirs of these years as follows: “In Japan and in the East as a whole, there is the danger of great social shifts and revolutions.”

We had been in paradise and left it with our heads hanging!

Theophil, far right, circa 1902. It is uncertain whether this photo was taken in Korea or Japan.



Deutsches Reich.

№ 47
des Passjournals.

Beschreibung:

Alter: 22 Jahre
Statur: schlank
Haar: blond
Stirn: frei
Augenbrauen: blond
Augen: braun
Mund: gewöhnlich
Bart: — — —
Kinn: oval
Gesichtsfarbe: gesund
Besondere Kennzeichen: — — —

Das Kaiserliche Gouvernement des deutschen Kiautschou-Gebietes zu Tsingtau ersucht hiermit alle Militär- und Civilbehörden, auf Vorzeigung dieses, den Preussischen Staatsangehörigen Leutnant zur See **Theophil Gautier** über Tschefu, Port Arthur, Dalny, Sibirien und Russland nach Deutschland frei und ungehindert reisen, auch nötigenfalls ihm Schutz und Beistand angedeihen zu lassen.

Gegeben zu Tsingtau,
den 30. September 1903.

Der Kaiserliche Gouverneur.
Im Auftrage
Günther

Unterschrift des Passinhabers:
Gautier

Reisepass
giltig auf ein Jahr.

Part Five
The Life and Loyalty of a Sailor

Chapter 15
From the Holy Isle to the Kaiserhof

Our time in the Far East had come to an end. Gone were the temples and dreams of gold and lacquer, where small clouds of smoke rose to the ceiling. Where the faithful offered their gods lovely taels[89] made of paper instead of real gold and silver and thus made their squeeze. The gods surely would not notice this pious deception. Gone were the lilies and Fujiyama, which always winked at us with its white peak whenever we came close to its holy presence.

Young, open people that we were, we found ourselves in a state of distress when we thought seriously of returning home and faced the decisions we had to make. It came time to bid farewell to the admiral I honoured and loved so much, to my comrades and to my subordinates to whom I felt closely connected, with whom I felt I belonged. My heart was pulled toward my old friends in Batavia, especially to the children who continued to write such touching letters to me.

We had three options when it came to our return home. First, we could go by the same route we had followed to get here, via Singapore. Second, we could go by ship via Yokohama to San Francisco and then take a train across the American continent, and then take another ship across the Atlantic. And finally, we could take a train through Russia. One must remember that tensions between Russia and Japan were very great at the time, and so we had an interest in seeing with our own eyes what was going on behind the Russian front and in gaining a view of the military preparations. This sealed my decision to travel home through Russia with some comrades.

In front of me [shown on opposite page and translated on next page] I have my passport, which is perhaps of historical interest. It was issued in Tsingtao by the Imperial Government of Kiaochow on September 30, 1903,[90] no. 47 of the passport record, and reads as follows:

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[89] T.N. Currency and weight measure in China.

[90] C.D. The date is not given in the manuscript but based on Gautier's date of birth it would have been issued in 1903.

German Empire

> Description: Age: 22 years, stature: slender, hair: blond, forehead: clear, eyebrows: blond, eyes: brown and a common (this sounds mean, but it likely isn't meant that way) beard, chin: oval, facial colour: healthy.
>
> The Imperial Government of the German Kiaochow Territory of Tsingtao asks of all military and civil offices presented with this document to allow free, unhindered passage of this naval lieutenant (name) to Germany via Zhifu, Port Arthur, Dalniy, Siberia and Russia, and if necessary to offer him protection and assistance. Signed on behalf of the Imperial Governor, Günther."

And now I will go by the notes I took at the time:

Only recently has the Siberian Railway, a magnificent work of modern technology, been opened for travel. It directly connects the very well-developed economic areas of China and Japan to Europe and shortens the travel time by more than a third. The reasons why the building and completion of this project took such a long time were the vast distance and natural obstacles. Supporting its completion, on the other hand, was the fact that the railway was built in a land ruled by the Tsar who, with almost dictatorial power, could achieve a great concentration of money and men. Further, the tense political relations forced the Tsar to build the railway at all costs.

The railway has two starting points in the east, Dalniy and Vladivostok. These two sections join up in Harbin. The line from Dalniy to Berlin via Moscow is 9,000 kilometres long. The difference in geographic length between Vladivostok and Berlin comes to—as the crow flies—120 degrees of longitude, that is about a third of the circumference of the earth. This corresponds to the distance from Cologne to the Sandwich Islands by way of the North Pole or from Gibraltar to Cape Town and back. In Siberia's harsh climate, the ground is frozen solid for months, making construction very difficult. Moreover, the summer and autumn months are prone to heavy flooding, which can destroy months' worth of work. For example, the section from Dalniy to Harbin was interrupted for six weeks last year. Particular difficulties were caused by the five large rivers, the Sungari, the Angara, the Yenisey, the Ob, and the Volga. The giant bridge constructions—this agglomeration of powerful blocks of stone and iron masses—seem entirely out of place in the otherwise utterly untouched solitude of the Siberian landscape. In addition to these obstacles there are those presented by the large mountains, the Chimgan, Yablonoi, and the Urals.

The twelve of us who were travelling together gathered at the branch office of the East Chinese Railway in Shanghai. This is where we bought the tickets for our crossing to Dalniy, which would be on one of the company's magnificently appointed steamships. We also

asked for information about the voyage, as our understanding of it was rather vague. It was at this juncture that we got a taste of Russian ways, as the ticket seller assured us that we would be able to continue travelling in Dalniy right away, without the need to quarantine. The next day, however, when he left the steamer as it put out to sea, he told us that we would have to quarantine for three days, which, as it would turn out, was a highly annoying and unpleasant experience in Dalniy.

Accompanying us all the way to Berlin was a very pleasant English merchant family. They felt uneasy in the alien milieu of Russia and kept close to us. After we had completed our quarantine in Dalniy, we were turned out into the streets. Our steamship had departed right away for Nagasaki. It was quite the ordeal to hire troikas to take us and the English family from the quays to the centre of town. These troikas are actually torture devices. Their name means nothing more than the fact that they are drawn by three horses. The vehicle is a small open cart, similar to those our farmers use to take their calves to market. The fastest horse runs in the middle under a curved yoke and is attached to two shafts. The two side horses constantly gallop. It seemed to me—since they pulled outward slightly—that they were keeping an eye on me with treacherous glances.

It was impossible to find accommodation in the town. The one hotel there had no vacancy. Even the utility rooms were occupied. Finally, the twelve of us found lodging in a boarding house whose whitewashed room had intact windows but no furnishings whatsoever. No bathroom or toilet far and wide. There was a lot of room outside and plenty of fresh air in which to answer the call of nature. Oh, how our thoughts raced to the lost paradise of Japan. Among the masses of Russian people, no great value is placed on European bathroom facilities. On the other hand, Russian baths are known around the world, though they are a rarity. On the train, too, bathrooms were few and far between. I have hardly had as refreshing and enjoyable a bath in my life as the one I had at the Hotel Kaiserhof in Berlin after we arrived.

On the day of our intended departure, a warning shot was fired at us in Dalniy. It was the ninth of October, 1900, the day that had been set for the evacuation of Manchuria. In the evening, the entire Russian fleet sailed in. There was rigorous exchange in the city and we learned from Russian naval officers we knew that war was about to be declared on Japan. The next day, we saw how the ships which had until then been painted white were now receiving a coat of black war paint. Nevertheless, we paid for our tickets, which cost 450 marks for second class.

We breathed a sigh of relief when the train finally heaved into motion. It was made up of two second-class cars, one first-class car, one luggage car with a berth for the personnel and a dining car

complete with kitchen. There was a piano in the dining car and in the luggage car, near the electrical hub, there stood a Zander exercising machine.[91] The final car at the back was a library car with comfortable armchairs, surrounded on all sides by windows which afforded an almost entirely unhindered view. One time when I was sitting there, looking at miles upon miles of land rolling away behind me, a herd of deer stepped out of the woods near the tracks. They looked at us without fear, and then disappeared back into the thicket.

The food and drink on board the train was simple and good. There was very nice Crimean wine and Russian beer. The train reached a maximum speed of thirty kilometres per hour. We often sat with our watches in our hands and kept track of the speed by listening to the beat resulting from the joined rail sections. Being on a train that long makes you soft in the head. Nothing but landscape and more landscape, sometimes all of it the same, monotonous. During one sunset in a very flat area, I saw a caravan of camels silhouetted against the glowing evening sky, animal after animal in a long chain—a fata morgana. An image that will be erased. At the time, Orville Wright was carrying out his first flights. Human genius was conquering the sky. I enjoyed the image of this caravan and committed it to memory, exquisite in its naturalness and the calmness it exuded.

In opposition to this sense of calm were the unsettling messages the Russian military state was sending with its actions. Every thirty kilometres or so, a military station would appear next to the railway. These stations consisted of a conical clay tower with a flat roof and many firing slits. We were told that along the whole length of the line, about 45,000 soldiers were distributed in these towers. If a fire was lit on the roof of one of the towers, this would be interpreted as an alarm signal by the neighbouring tower. Not only this, but strong patrols constantly rode back and forth between the towers to protect against marauding Tungusics. Keeping such close guard must have come at a great expense!

Our first longer stay was in the town of Harbin. This is where we connected with the train from Vladivostok. Harbin is a purely military settlement with unadorned, uniform brick buildings. The streets were bottomless. We waded through them sullenly. We didn't have anything specific in mind and only wanted to stretch our legs. A Russian general questioned us in French, wanting to know who we were, where we were from, where we were going and why. More and more military trains kept going by, headed eastward to the future

[91] C.D. Dr. Gustav Zander was a Swedish physician who designed a number of exercise machines, not too dissimilar to today's gym equipment, in the late 1800s.

battle zone, carrying soldiers, armament and horses. Increasingly, we had to stop to let the trains pass. What handsome, sturdy and healthy soldiers these Russians were. To all appearances, they were magnificent troops, but a decade and a half later they would be scattered to the four winds in the revolution. The Russian general boarded our train, and so, at each station, we saw before us the ever-recurring image of a parade. Discipline was iron-fisted; one could almost feel the lash.

Crossing the Chimgan mountains gave us a very pleasant change of scenery. The train chugged along the serpentines in the mountains, pulled by two locomotives in the front and pushed by a third at the back. There were lovely views of the valley below and you could imagine that you were in Switzerland. As we reached higher altitudes, it grew cool. Looking out the train windows, you could see trout in the crystal-clear mountain streams. They were being sold at the stations and were a welcome addition to our menu. At that point it was actually only cabbage soup that was being offered, and it tasted very pleasant.

In the mountains we saw the destructive exploitation of the forest for the first time. Wide swaths on both sides of the mountain had been logged in order to provide enough fuel for the hungry locomotives. They were powered by wood alone, by such valuable timber that it ate a hole in your heart. When, at nightfall, we had reached the western side of the mountains and were gradually approaching the flatlands, an exciting image unfurled before our eyes. A fire was ablaze before us in the steppes and it seemed as if it were going to block our passage. But finally, the blaze changed course and we were able to bed down reassured. In the night, it began to snow and soon the snow was quite deep. Again, it seemed as if the forces of nature were trying to stand in our way. The train slowed down even more, but we kept moving forward.

On the eighth day, we finally arrived at Lake Baikal. It was minus ten degrees Celsius and the wind was fierce. The sound of the breakers overpowered everything and our eyes once more beheld a clear horizon. After all, Lake Baikal is as large as Bavaria. We then took a two-thousand-tonne steamship ferry across the lake in the bitter cold, yawing quite a bit throughout the four-hour passage. Since then, a further stretch of railway has been built and you no longer have to take the ferry. On the other side of the lake, another train was waiting for us. Incidentally, the lake sometimes freezes solid, and when it did, passengers were transported across on sleds.

We continued westward via Irkutsk and Omsk. On the twelfth day, we crossed over into Europe. Right next to the tracks there was an imposing obelisk with the word: Europe. As we passed through many little towns and villages, we noticed the many chapels. There were gilded pictures of saints, icons. Believers had kissed them, and

they were all black in these places. Long live hygiene! Finally, we were in Samara and we "gobbled up" caviar. One of us indulged so much that he was sick for days and we worried about him. How much joy we could have caused with that surplus amount. We only had enough money to buy small barrels full. I gave mine to my uncle, brightening his days which had been filled with incessant dumplings. Incessant because it took a long time to finish them or because you felt pity all the time for those who had to eat them. That's how spoiled we once were!

On one of the last days of our train voyage, two rather adventurous-looking passengers boarded. They turned out to be two English geologists who had been doing research. They told us that they had found very valuable and minable deposits. In Moscow we disembarked with them; we stayed at the same hotel. In no time at all, these questionable figures transformed into elegantly dressed gentlemen who had no trouble spending money because they had just earned a great deal.

The Kremlin was an amazing sight. As night fell, we stood before its walls and had the overwhelming feeling that we were standing before an eerie power. And indeed, we were being kept under constant surveillance. It was an unusual state to be in. We stayed there for two days, then continued on. Twenty-six days after our departure in Tsingtao, we arrived in Berlin. We must have looked quite odd, and indeed we were quite filthy after the long train trip. And so it seemed it was not simply due to our number but also due to our appearance that we could not find accommodation at the Hotel Adlon but only at the Kaiserhof. One might entitle this chapter of our life story as follows: "From the Holy Isle to the Kaiserhof." Our home had become foreign to us. We were missing the glamour of the East.

Route of Theophil's train trip home from the Far East.

Chapter 16
Torpedo Training in Flensburg

Suddenly I found myself back on a torpedo training ship in Flensburg, serving as watch officer and adjutant. The training programs had been developed much further and were even more intensive. Course after course was held, filling all the rooms. Schools and barracks as well as berths for numerous auxiliary ships were being built. The amount of paperwork I had to deal with was immense and sometimes I was almost in a state of desperation about it, all the more because I had a bit of a warhorse as a commander, from whom I was worlds apart philosophically speaking. He was almost repulsive to me. But this made life in the mess hall all the more fun; it was there that I sought and found compensation for certain iniquities. Ale is good for what ails you.[92] I put this idea to the test so thoroughly one time that my friend, a junior doctor, decided to take me into to his caring treatment. From then on, I consumed only appropriate doses of alcohol of the finest quality and sweetened an hour or two here and there.

Stationed in Flensburg was the feudal infantry regiment known as the *Königin* (the Queen). We were in close contact with them, but those brothers in their colourful uniform coats looked upon us merely as Jack tars. This was a thorn in our side. So we got up to the following prank. As spirits were soaring one night during a raucous party, one of us, after performing several magic tricks, claimed he could pour a glass of beer into a man's pants' pocket without the person becoming wet at all. There was an intense dispute over this. "I'll pay for a bottle of bubbly if I'm wrong," the magician said. A brother in a colourful coat took him up on the bet, pulling off his coat and standing there with his pocket outstretched. Calmly, the magician took a glass of beer and poured it into the soldier's pocket. A real torrent issued forth at the bottom of the lucky man's trousers. "That's too bad. It always worked before! Waiter, a bottle of bubbly on me!"

Another time a crude joke almost had a nasty ending. We young officers arranged with a lieutenant-commander to make it appear as if we were revolting against him. We made a show of telling him that he had long become loathsome to us. Now we had him cornered and he was not to defend himself because we were going to throw him overboard. Using the large gun port, this is what we proceeded to do in a united effort. The colourful brothers went pale with fright,

[92] T.N. A loose translation of Wilhelm Busch's "Wer Sorgen hat hat auch Likör."

cautioned us about the court martial and the serious consequences, and tried in vain to keep us from carrying out our atrocity. In front of the gun port we had left numerous ropes hanging down from the rescue cutter, which the lieutenant-commander was supposed to use to lower himself down. Below, his batman was to wait with the dinghy and take him in. So we threw the lieutenant-commander out and immediately we heard his cries of pain. Our plan had not worked out. Going quite the speed, he had fallen into the cutter, which had not been moved in time. Luckily, he came away with only a few scratches and bruises. Up above in the mess, we believed that everything had gone according to plan and we took pleasure in hearing the lieutenant-commander curse; the infantrymen must have thought us criminals. Our crude prank had been worth it. When the lieutenant-commander appeared in the mess again, the air was cleared and everyone was jubilant. How often we later laughed about this lark.

During this time, I became close friends with C., a comrade from my year. He was enormously talented, a musician, poet and a good athlete. We played a lot of tennis, which led to lively travel in the town and to the beaches of the fjord. On one of these cycling trips, C. rode ahead because my shift was not yet over and passed a bolting team of horses drawing a carriage. The horses were frantic and the driver was being dragged, unconscious and bleeding heavily. Having jumped or fallen off the coach-box, he had gotten one leg tangled up in the reins. It was high time to intervene if the man was to come away with his life. So C. rode ahead with his bicycle and valiantly threw himself against the horses. He too was dragged along at first, smashing into trees and heaps of stones and almost losing his life. But he held on tight and finally, when the animals grew tired, he gained the upper hand and, bruised and bleeding heavily, brought them to a halt. Then he laid the unconscious driver in the grass, tied the horses to a tree, and went in search of a doctor with his bicycle. For his magnanimous deed that put his life on the line, he was awarded the lifesaving medal. This would be the only case of a seaman receiving the lifesaving medal for engaging in a duel with horses. From this one sees how the seaman is right when he claims that horses are wild animals that are out to kill people.

But after a while, certain signs of trouble began to show in C.'s effervescent vitality, as one might put it. He lost a sense of measure and purpose, was imbalanced in his mood and began to incline toward melancholy. Perhaps he had suffered a brain injury during his rescue operation. I was deeply concerned by his condition and I talked about it with his father. I tried everything to pep and cheer him up and, as a friend, I struggled with his fate. But things could not be changed. During a fleet maneuver, he had been enlisted as a watch officer on a small cruiser, while I was on a ship of the line. It

was a magical night in May. The moon was shining and the sea was in a state of deep calm. Suddenly a radio message came through and was turned over to me; I had the middle watch and was on the bridge. My dear friend, after completing his evening watch half an hour previously, had gone to the quarterdeck, played his beloved trumpet one last time, and then wrapped the sounding line around his leg and leapt overboard. The heavy lead weight immediately pulled him under and now he sleeps his eternal sleep at the eastern end of the Strait of Dover. As I write this, I can see his face before me, his eyes looking at me with glee, and I have the feeling that we are not separated by a whole era but rather that he is about to pick me up to go play tennis, elation in his voice.

Meanwhile, our duties moved ahead at full tilt. As before, our ship performed its figure eights and spit torpedoes out of every hole. Separately, with the necessary train of boats behind them, numerous torpedo boats practiced their shots in the wide-stretching exterior fjord. They shot modern torpedoes, whose range was significantly greater. Meanwhile, tonnes of leftovers served as food for a growing number of pigs, which had been purchased by the canteen. A divine Eumaeus[93] was also found and, due to the general fun that was being had with the animals, considered himself the centre of activity, to the point that we watch officers felt a certain amount of annoyance with the whole mess.

Because of an engine failure, one of the torpedo boats once ran into the wooden girders when it was trying to moor at the mooring bridge and crushed a poor sailor who was standing on the forecastle to throw the lines. It was a dreadful tragedy and it took the unhappy torpedo boat commander a long time to get past it. But all of this could not get in the way of the navy's tenacious will to achieve. In all of us burned the fire of love for a fatherland which, we increasingly felt, was in peril.

We were connected to the city of Flensburg through a number of boats, the largest of which was the Grauer Esel (The Grey Donkey). It was an old and valiant, indestructible tug. When we were about to go to town in the late afternoon after our onboard duties, we would always ask which boat was going to be the last one that night to sail back out. We were glad when it was the Grauer Esel as she had a large cabin, which allowed you to stay warm and dry during the twenty-minute trip. Waiting for this boat, we often sat in a small bar at the harbour and drank one last grog. We were always served by the same old factotum with whom we had our fun. One time one of us said to her, "Christine, let's see your profile." Christine misunderstood and, turning slightly red, she replied, "But Lieutenant-Commander, you don't do things like that!"

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[93] T.N. Odysseus's swineherd and friend

In the final six months, I became an instructing officer, and had to give lessons in the science of torpedoes. It was a difficult task that demanded much diligence and devotion because after all, a torpedo "looks like chitlins but has to work." The technical knowledge that we teachers had to acquire was indeed great and I am thankful that I was forced to gain such a thorough understanding of the technology back then. Learning so much about it was all the more important as I was later involved with it more and more, and for years earned a living for me and my family using this knowledge.

One of my students happened to be one of my cousins with whom I had grown up in his parents' house. He was a stunningly handsome officer and we were very attached to each other. About ten years later, when he was a watch officer on the Leipzig cruiser, he had to depart from his young life during the battle of the Falkland Islands. His death was difficult. He was severely injured and was laid down, in a clear state of mind, in a protected corner of the ship. He then experienced the slow defeat and eventual capsizing of the ship. When this moment came and those who were not wounded donned life jackets and went overboard, he still found the strength to call out and say, "Send my love to everyone back home!" Now, like all the others, he is waiting for us comrades who are still alive.[94]

Once, when we were on shore at the harbour for several days while urgent repairs were being made on our training ship, we practiced taking a heavy bow anchor out by attaching it to the large rowed launch. It was a mighty big hunk: a heavy, old-fashioned admiralty's anchor, that is an anchor that only grips with one arm, as opposed to modern anchors that burrow into the seabed with two ploughshares and can therefore be lighter. The boat's stern was pulled well into the water, but ultimately there was still a palm's width of freeboard once its whole weight was on the launch. And then us small boats went under the anchor hawseholes.[95] A whole twenty-five-metre section of chain was veered out and hung up around the bow of my boat on both sides, fastened with hemp strops. When one side was weighed down, the boat listed so badly that I was afraid water would start coming in. The first officer climbed down, had a look at the situation and decided that it passed muster. All the more so as it accorded with the service regulations. And so the chain was attached to the boats length by length in the same manner. My boat was at the front, directly after the boat with the anchor. The chain lengths were shackled together one after the

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[94] C.D. This cousin would have been one of the sons of the Gisecke family with whom Gautier lived in Osnabrück, as described in Chapter 3. The tragedy is that three of the four brothers—Otto Wilhelm, Helmut and Wolfhard—were killed in World War I, with only Hans surviving.

[95] C.D. A hole in the deck of a ship through which the anchor cable passes.

other, and my chain at the front was shackled to the anchor. When the anchor was far enough away from the ship and the boats were in position, the anchor was dropped. At the same instant, my sailors, who were holding knives, cut the strops on one side. What followed went as quick as lightning. After being relieved of its burden on one side, my boat pitched to the other. The sailors had not been quick enough to move over to the higher side, following the command, and now the boat was listing so much that water was coming in. The strops on the low-lying side were not cut fast enough and the boat was being pulled underwater. By the time I understood what was going on, I was under the sinking boat, which was slowly rolling downward. I saw that a whole lot of my men were in the same situation as I. All of us tried to swim free of the boat, and most were successful.

When I came to the surface, completely out of breath, I saw a sailor who was on the brink of drowning. I immediately swam over to him and got a hold of his blue collar. Because of the chaos and the fact that I had only just gotten to the surface myself, I didn't pay attention for a moment and immediately the drowning man had his arms around me. Luckily, another boat was approaching us. An oar was lowered to me and I clung to it. The drowning man climbed up the length of my body and in his mortal fear he gave me a good kick as he pushed off from my shoulders. I went deep beneath the surface and lost consciousness for a moment. Then I felt wood, which I clung to with all the strength I had left. It was an oar and my comrades were pulling me up with it. I was pulled into the boat and laid down; slowly, life came back to me. Unfortunately, it turned out that three men were missing. It was too much: the fright and then fearing for my life and now this harrowing news. I began to cry.

I was subsequently court martialled. I was found not guilty; on the contrary, it was found that I had shown professionalism and a willingness to sacrifice. Over the following nights, the swollen bodies of the drowned men rose to the surface. For each, there was a funeral procession, and each was buried. And each time, I had to lead the procession through town and march behind the coffin to the beat of the heart-wrenching funeral marches. They had been my subordinates, and, standing at the open grave, all that was left to do was give the command: "Make ready. Present. Salvo Fire, men!" We paid our last respects to our comrades with three salvos. It was an unbelievable shock for me as a twenty-three-year-old, and this unhappy memory weighed on me for a long time. *Omnes eodem cogimur*. All of us will walk the same path.

Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany. Through Prince Heinrich Theophil got to know the Emperor, who was a determined proponent of a strong German navy.

Prince Heinrich, the brother of Emperor Wilhelm II. He was a close friend of Christa's great grandfather, Gustav Bachmann, Admiral of the Imperial German Navy. Gustav's grandson, Christa's uncle Heinz Bachmann, was named after him, and Christa believes Prinz Heinrich was his godfather. Theophil was also well acquainted with him.

Theophil as a young officer in Flensburg.

Chapter 17
The Prince, the Tsar and the Emperor

The continually rising number of students and classes made for a constant expansion of the torpedo training school. More and more properties were bought up on the bank, close to the ships, new buildings were constructed and new plans were constantly being made for further expansion. As adjutant, I often stayed up late at night writing the relevant applications, making calculations for staffing and budgets and putting it all on paper. Due to this, I had a perfect overview of all the complicated proceedings. I was present at every meeting and I usually had the required information for any decision that was to be made at my fingertips or at least I could quickly consult the documents I had on my person.

But there was always enough time left for recreation and fun. One day, several English destroyers entered our harbour and moored there. There were huge parties. We were seeing some of the English naval officers a second or third time because we had already met them somewhere or other. I especially enjoyed being able to talk with them about the Far East. They, too, were still day-dreaming about it. After seeing that they had installed an automatic target thrower on their wheelhouse, we agreed to have a clay pigeon shooting competition. Coincidentally, we also had a shooting range set up on our beach and had plenty of practice. Thus, both sides performed well and our friendship deepened, as friendship always does when one has a sport in common. After a few days, our guests left us, just as we had the feeling that they were about to join in our training program.

They had hardly been gone when our highest superior, the Chief of the Naval Station of the Baltic Sea, announced his arrival, which was for the purpose of gathering the information he needed to make certain decisions. The station chief at the time was Prince Heinrich of Prussia, the brother of the emperor. I was sent to receive the prince by my commander, who was new and valued me highly. Wearing my dress uniform, I rode to meet the prince on my bicycle, and it was my job to lead him along the somewhat difficult path through the fields, which he was to take in his automobile. The prince was one of the first automobile drivers in Germany and in the world of sports he was well-known. From far away, I saw the prince's automobile coming, but then it stopped at a bush. On my way, I had been going over all the forms of address in my mind so as to avoid making a mistake. After all, this was the second time I'd been in contact with a royal highness. When I arrived at the automobile, I saw that the prince had gotten out and was answering the call of nature

behind a bush. I had not planned how I might act in such a situation and my jaw quite literally dropped. The prince then approached me. He was truly a royal sight. He had an impressive stature, looked as healthy as a horse and his attitude was endearing. Laughing, he extended his leather-gloved hand toward me and shook my hand and I addressed him appropriately. Everyone in the automobile—his chief of staff, an aide-de-camp and a sailor as a driver—was laughing. They had all seen my surprise over the unplanned part of the program. The sailor took my bicycle and I sat down next to the prince, who was now at the wheel.

The field path was quite narrow and angular, and so I had to give directions often. When we had climbed the hill, and the fjord and the whole torpedo school complex lay below us, the prince stopped and asked me to give him a report. Everyone in the car was standing and listening to my descriptions. I was entirely in my element: I had all the numbers and arguments in my head and could offer a complete picture of all the aspirations, concerns and joys. I noticed that the prince looked at me several times. He spoke a few words with his chief of staff, who answered yes to a question the prince asked. At the end of my presentation, I made a sweeping gesture with my hand, indicating the surrounding fields, and, with a voice teeming with pride, said, "All of this, your Royal Highness, is already ours." What I meant was that the navy treasury was already the owner. This comment was the icing on the cake. It seemed to me that the prince could have embraced me. "You see," he said to his chief, "this is the kind of lieutenant we need. He identifies with the treasury and lives and works for it alone. I will tell my brother, the emperor, what our lieutenant here has said—it will make him happy."

He thanked me kindly for my comprehensive report and said that he might as well go back home as he was now in the know and had no further questions. From this day forth until his death, I was deeply devoted to the prince, and each time I saw him he honoured me with friendly words and a handshake. We got back to the torpedo school complex a little late. My commander was pleased when he heard about the reporting I had done and the recognition I had received from the prince. Then the prince greeted the troops so endearingly that I am certain that anyone who saw him back then would look back on the day with joy. It is not true what nasty critics say when they speak of "zombie obedience."[96] There was good, solid comradery between officer and soldier, based on achievement and respect. Our duties were far too interesting to produce boredom or the sense that we were being forced to do something against our will.

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[96] T.N. "Kadavergehorsamkeit" was a frequently-invoked criticism, the idea that someone follows a leader with the same absence of will that a corpse or a cadaver would have; more extreme than "blind obedience."

Everyone knew that he couldn't get by without the others. While the prince was busy with the troops and was speaking with the commander, it was my job to prepare lunch in the commander's cabin. This time, I didn't forget the salt.

When I let them know that lunch was ready, the prince asked that the entire troop, as it was, to congregate on the quarterdeck as he had an announcement to make. Immediately there was a loud whistle that all boatswain's mates answered: "All hands to the quarterdeck!" A wall of men formed a dam in front of the prince. He took a step toward us and, I could hardly believe my ears, began to speak of the unfortunate anchor maneuver. He laid out the whole picture of what had transpired. He told us not to become discouraged as such things can happen and do happen in all serious professions. He said he also wanted to conclude his talk with a thank-you and with recognition for two men and comrades who had shown a willingness to sacrifice, namely me and a petty officer. Both, he said, had risked their lives to save drowning comrades and they were to be thanked, which he was hereby doing in the name of the crew.

I had been prepared for everything, just not this. I glanced around, embarrassed. My commander smiled at me, as did many other familiar faces, and from all of these glances I got the feeling of glowing appreciation and delight in this surprise. And then the prince turned to his aide-de-camp and took two small cases from him. He asked that I and the petty officer step forward. In the breathless silence, he personally pinned the rescue medals on yellow-white ribbons onto both of our lapels and shook our hands cordially. It was my first decoration and likely the most valuable. It would always bring to mind this impressive moment. After all, it was ultimately a kind of bandage for the wound that had been left by three lost comrades. How much more wonderful it would have been if they had been rescued. But nothing could be done about that now. All I could do was erect a monument for them in my heart. I wonder if God asked for my beloved second son in atonement—my son who found his grave in the North Sea? Now, living in a state of forced idleness after the Second World War, I often cannot rid myself of such thoughts, and at night, when other people sleep, I agonize over them.

Because I was acquainted with the prince, I received regular invitations to the royal balls at the palace in Kiel, the prince's residence, in the following years. I very often, and with much enjoyment, engaged in social pleasures in these years. I was almost a society man, and I would have become one to the full extent had I not been perfectly devoted to my duties, which offset the socializing in the right way. I was a good dancer, and danced plenty. But at the heart of it I was terribly lonely. Already back then, I would have loved to have

found a spouse. I longed for love, for a home and a family. That was the deeper reason why I craved pleasure so much.

As I remember them, these royal balls held by the prince were the epitome of beauty. First of all, everyone was dressed to the nines. You saw women dressed and made up with incredible care and artfulness. In addition, there was the magnificent heirloom jewellery of the old nobility and the officials. Coming from Hamburg and other ports of the province as well as from Mecklenburg, there were the rich bosses of German international trading companies and from the industries that were burgeoning at the time. And there was the officer corps, predominately from the navy of course, but also detachments from many proud regiments of the coastal towns which were laden with tradition, their officers in colourful uniforms. With our uniforms, we naval officers completed the picture. Our gala uniform, which we were required to wear to these royal balls, consisted of a long-tailed overcoat cut as a frock coat, which had a gilt collar that was closed at the front and lapels lined in white material, with sleeve flaps in like manner. Everything trimmed in gold lace. The trousers, which featured "lightning rods", that is wide golden stripes, completed the uniform. We carried the heavy sabre with brass fittings in a leather sheath and wore the bicorne, the traditional hat of all navies. We wore white glacé leather gloves the whole evening, only removing them when we ate.

We danced marvellously. The palace's large rooms allowed us to dance Les Lanciers with many couples, which one of us had to lead. You danced by grasping your sabre and your bicorne in your left hand, which was also the hand that held the lady. It was quite difficult but could be pulled off without further ado if you were a good dancer. Those of us who were not very good dancers did have some trouble, however. They must have cursed this strict etiquette, but I for one am convinced that this served as an excellent education for the officer corps.

During one of these balls, I became acquainted with the niece of my beloved admiral from East Asia, the young countess. Her uncle had me called over to them and said a few very nice things about me to his niece and her parents. She was such a pretty and dear little countess: soon my heart was ablaze. We managed to meet at many a ball and I would like to know just how many times I went to Hamburg, taking up the invitation of one of the many families who supported the navy. I also made many visits to her parents' estate in Mecklenburg. My connection with her lasted years. But then, when I was at her estate, I could not make the leap and ask her parents for her hand, the decisive question. In the final analysis, I was bourgeois and the countess was from one of the most highly esteemed noble families. Our separation pierced my heart. Although I was a wealthy man because I was the sole heir to my father's fortune, which I had

assumed possession of when I reached the age of majority, this did not make up for it. We were also too proud to let financial matters influence our considerations and choices. And so we simply remained good friends and I still think of her fondly today. Is it not a strange twist of fate that she became a motherly friend to my later daughter-in-law and that she was with me not at our own wedding but at the weddings of my children?

During one of these royal balls, there was a disturbance. Telegrams arrived announcing serious revolutions in Russia.[97] This was after the unfortunate end of the war with the Japanese. Our connection with tsarist Russia had become severed. We saw expressions of deep dismay on the faces of the royal family—after all, Princess Irene, the wife of the prince, was the sister of the tsarina. The next day, several torpedo boats were sent to Kronstadt.[98] There they encountered severe resistance from the revolutionaries, but in the end, they were able to restore the connection to the tsar's family. Now a torpedo boat was travelling back and forth between Königsberg and Kronstadt every day to enable communication between Russia and the West. The crew of these boats later received Russian medals, which was the cause of quite some envy. Looking at this with the experience we have today, it is clear that this service would have been quite dangerous.

And now my thoughts wander to my last encounter with Prince Heinrich, which took place about twelve years later. After I had become a very seasoned torpedo boat operator and had even led a flotilla, I was entrusted with commanding the first lead destroyer of our navy. It was a vessel weighing approximately 2,300 tonnes that could reach very high speeds, a maximum of 36 knots. It featured four 15-centimeter guns behind armoured protective shields, six torpedo tubes with electric swivelling drives, ammunition refrigeration rooms and a gyroscopic compass system with various repeaters. With this vessel, I was to engage in cruiser combat with England. It was September 1918, just before the end of the war, in other words. As a completely new vessel type, the destroyer had the attention of everyone in the navy. It was taken for a test sail, and the final phase in this test was to bring the vessel to top speed. Prince Heinrich announced his presence on board. Shortly after we'd left the Kiel harbour, I gradually began to speed up the vessel so that we could be at top speed in the marked-out mile in the belts. The prince was standing next to me on the bridge, chatting with me. We enjoyed how the vessel was going faster and faster and was reaching the designated

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[97] C.D. The exact date here is not known, but this would be during the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907.

[98] T.N. Today's Kronštádt, a Russian port city located on Kotlin Island, near Saint Petersburg.

maximum speed without any difficulties. I noticed how the bow was slowly starting to rise, which had to do with the pull from the acceleration, I figured. Suddenly, a telephone rang. The person manning the stern-most section announced: "There is a breach! Water is coming in in Section One. The room has to be evacuated." I gave the command: "Close the bulkheads!" Just then I saw the prince running across the main deck, dashing to the stern and disappearing down the ladderway to Section Two. Immediately afterward, I saw a uniformed arm with many stripes. It was the prince's arm throwing a suitcase on deck from below. This scene was repeated several times: again and again, this arm hoisted some kind of object upward. Next, he acted as the foreman, leading the mission to brace the bulkhead partition between Sections One and Two. After it had become clear that the breach remained limited to the stern-most section and did not threaten the rest of the vessel, the prince returned happily to the bridge. The sailors were beaming. They had gotten to know a good comrade in the brother of the emperor, the high admiral—someone who would help out in a time of need just as any other would.

This very successful test drive had to be stopped there for the day, unfortunately. As it turned out, the propellers had thrown the water against the ship's outer wall with so much force that it ruptured. The vessel had to be docked and the place on her stern where the propellers spun had to be reinforced with armour plates. The mechanical engineers had won the battle against the shipbuilders.

On the way back to Kiel, the Prince sat with me in the cabin, where we both ate. There was a stew, and to drink, water with cherry juice. The prince had a good appetite. We talked about this and that, and at some point, the prince became contemplative and told me about his in-law, the tsar, and his family. He had not heard from them. He told me that good, dependable men had been sent to the interior of Russia to re-establish the connection. Apparently, all of them had been killed; none of the dispatched men had turned up again. This was terrible, he said, and he and his wife feared the worst for their close relatives. And then, searching me with his eyes, he asked, "Tell me, do you think it possible that there could be a revolution here as well? And what would it be like; would there be such horrors as in Russia?" I was speechless. Such thoughts had never entered my mind or the mind of any of my comrades. And so I answered quickly: "Your Royal Highness, a revolution is out of the question in Germany. No German soldier would ever stoop to such a thing." Again, the prince looked at me searchingly and said, "I hope you are right!" Six weeks later, the prince was shot at by his own men and there was a struggle for power in the fleet.

When the prince disembarked, he shook my hand and showered me with warm, friendly words. I did not know that this would be the last time I might look into his eyes. After the collapse, he retreated

to his palace in Hemmelmark, which is located in the beautiful landscape around Eckernförde Bay. A few years later, he died. Twelve former naval officers carried his coffin. Unfortunately, I was unable to fulfill the request to be among the pallbearers because I was abroad. And so I could not even pay my last respects to Prince Heinrich. For all those who had the privilege of coming into contact with him, he will live on in memory as the man he was, a *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*. [A knight without fear and beyond reproach.]

Having written about Prince Heinrich here, it only makes sense that my thoughts now drift to his brother, the emperor, the man I remember with such feelings of devotion. My first distant memory of him comes in the form of the tears my mother shed when the postman told her the news of the death of Emperor Frederick III, and she spoke of the young emperor. He was just twenty-seven[99] years old when he came to rule and had to take on the task that so abounded with difficulties. All the more as the constitution was quite unfavourable. Various accusations have been thrown at him, but they are unjustified as he himself was often not responsible for the decisions. The German Reichstag was divided and often offered up a disquieting image. One has to consider that the crown often did not have the power to make decisions, just a veto right. Not only this, but the emperor came to rule in a time in which there was intense social struggle. With powerful industrialization, great groups of people in Germany were massed together in a few centres. The transition from a tranquil agricultural state to an industrialized nation happened at a frenzied pace and the opportunity was missed to put in place the measures that this shift made necessary. One ought not speak of a malicious will here so much as inability.

The first impression I gained of the emperor in person was when I was in *Quinta,*[100] when he rode through the town where I attended the Gymnasium. The emperor was in Silesia to hunt on one of the large estates owned by nobility. As darkness fell, he rode in an open hunting carriage from the train station to the countryside. School children from all the schools formed guards of honour in the town as he rode through. As he rode past us, we waved our school hats and yelled "hurrah!" I was very happy; indeed, I felt exalted. This was our emperor, after all! One has to consider that at the time it had been just twenty years since the French Empire was vanquished. The memory of the victory was still fresh in people's minds. The majority of soldiers who had fought in the war were still alive and in the middle of their gainful employment. September 2, the day of the capitulation of Sedan and the capture of Emperor Napoleon III, was therefore still celebrated with gusto. On our estate, we hosted a

[99] T.N. Sources today say he was twenty-nine.
[100] T.N. The equivalent of grade 6 in the Canadian school system.

public festival to which many people came. Firecrackers were set off in front of the church, firing the 21-shot salute, which for us students of a small country school was a powerful experience. It gave us the impression of fighting and war, making our hearts beat enthusiastically for glory. In the evening there were more fireworks. Spirits soared, one speech followed on the heels of another and in the end the entire adult population ended up at the inn and celebrated until dawn.

Three years later, I had the opportunity to see the emperor in a similar situation. He was riding in an open landau with the tsar Nicholas II all the way down the long Wilhelmstraße in Wiesbaden to the quarters of the tsar, who had come for a visit. In front of and behind the carriage were cavalry divisions. The street was under tight military guard on both sides. All of my uncle's family and I had gone to Wilhelmstraße to partake in the experience. My uncle was very restless and, contrary to our wishes, kept us in back, close to a door. A great number of people were crowding together behind the military cordon, among them a number of foreigners—which, however, was not unusual for the international city of Wiesbaden. I could see the emperor and the tsar very clearly and I made sure to commit their appearances to memory, a memory that is still vivid. The emperor was stately and healthy-looking while the tsar was delicate and of slight build. At that time, his fate had not yet befallen him. During the First World War, there would come the murders of him and his family. This dreadful end to the Romanovs is paralleled only by the tragic fate of Louis XVI.

My uncle, fearing that something might happen while the two rulers rode by in their carriage, had kept us back near the door to a house. My uncle's words puzzled me. Why should anyone want to murder men who looked so kind? A lifetime later, I spent the night in Steyr, Austria. In the morning, before it was time to get back on the road, I was walking around the fabulously dreamlike market square, enjoying looking at the scenery that served Spitzweg as a model for many a painting. Suddenly I saw the sign for an inn showing three painted figures in old-fashioned uniforms. It was the Three Monarchs Inn. The sign depicted the tsar, the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia as allies in the fight against Emperor Napoleon I. My thoughts drifted to the emperor and tsar's carriage ride through Wiesbaden, an experience that was fundamentally different from the thoughts that the inn's sign meant to express through its picture. Today, devotion to monarchs is hardly known anymore. Their regimes are called accursed and they are either killed or left to die in exile with broken hearts. May humankind with its new forms of government be happier. I understand the message of it but I lack the belief.

Several years went by before I joined the navy, during which time I did not see the emperor. I have already described the fleeting impressions of him that our time as naval cadets gave us. But with these I was always only one of many, until the day came when I would have a close, personal encounter with him, an experience that ingrained itself deeply in my heart and in my memory. During Kiel Week, the emperor wanted to get to know the Fähnrichs. We were in training at the naval academy, that is to say in our second year of service. We formed guards of honour from the academy landing stage, where the emperor was to moor, all the way to the tennis courts, past the monument to the Great Elector. There was thus about a meter's distance between each man and each of us was to be able to get a good look at the emperor. We had paid great attention to our appearance and were indeed a fine-looking, select troop: all of us well-built, healthy young men who had undergone exceptional physical training. It truly must have been a feast for the eyes. And now the imperial launch *Hulda* was arriving, flying the yellow imperial standard. I took another deep breath. And then the emperor arrived. The command, "Eyes right!" allowed us to look straight at him. He wore the blue tunic, white trousers, shoes and a white hat. His somewhat too short left arm held the dagger. He had a moustache, which was brushed steeply upwards at the tips. For the navy, this was a somewhat unusual sight as we were only allowed to grow goatees, if anything. Behind him were two adjutants. That was all. There was a breathless silence. All we could hear were the usual sounds from the harbour. Our commander stepped forward and reported. And then the emperor came close to the first of us. In his sonorous and calm voice, he said, "Good day, Fähnrichs." "Good day, Your Majesty" was our answer. Now he came closer to me. He was healthy-looking, neither tall nor short, completely balanced in the expression of his handsome face and in his movements. He was entirely natural, without a trace of affectation. It was the kind of presentation we were accustomed to from our superiors. And here he was casting his eyes on me, eyes of which I have never since seen the like, I believe. A glowing blue, brilliant, almost blinding. It felt to me as if his eyes drilled through me and looked into the deepest part of me. On the outside I retained my calm, but inside I was made of wax. From this moment on, I was devoted to the emperor and nothing could sever me from him. As per the rules, we followed him with our heads until he was three men away and then one's head could look straight ahead again. It occurred to me then just how closely the emperor resembled Frederick the Great, a similarity that was even clearer, however, with his brother, Prince Heinrich of Prussia and clearest and most noticeably of all with his son, the crown prince.

I had several similar encounters with the emperor during visits and maneuvers in the years that followed. He was instrumental in building the fleet and he personally oversaw each significant step in the process. But it would be another ten years before I came to be in contact with him for weeks on end. This was a year before the First World War, when I became dispatch boat commander for the SS Hohenzollern during the emperor's northland trip. Taking turns with a comrade who also commanded a dispatch boat, I went to Bergen every other day so as to deliver the daily mail and some provisions to the Hohenzollern, which would be moored somewhere in a fjord. The provisions came—to the extent that they could not be obtained in Norway—from Berlin, from Borchert,[101] I believe. It was mainly fruit and vegetables, things that were more difficult to come by in Norway. In addition, there were many heavy leather bags containing the mail from the ministries. Aboard the Hohenzollern were either the ministers themselves or their secretaries of state, all of whom were the guests of the emperor. Every day from 9 am until teatime, the emperor was diligently at work in the government cabin on the upper deck. The empire's operations continued without interruption. This was the emperor's so-called vacation. He was a hardworking and conscientious man.

After teatime, he would go ashore in the hope of stretching his legs and having some time to himself. But this was often false hope. Hardly had he set foot on land when a gaggle of women who had been waiting for him would throw themselves at him, hoping for an autograph. With a steady friendliness, he would fulfill each of these wishes, although you could tell by looking at him that he longed for a moment to himself. The supplicants were all foreigners. A number of yachts from various countries were usually found near the anchorage of the Hohenzollern, and their owners were often seen on board as guests. Many of them were notable Anglo-Saxons, with whom the emperor liked to have economic and political discussions. It always delighted us officers to see him in such situations. He was always the master, ever prepared and capable in any situation. We never had the feeling that he was embarrassed or unable to take a stand. On the other hand, we had the most agreeable impression of his modesty, charming kindness, and complete lack of arrogance. This was our emperor. He was not some mythical animal but a human being in the flesh and blood, like us. Perhaps he was not exceptionally "clever," otherwise he could have worked more deviously, but he certainly was not dumb—likely he was too polite and also too trustful. He loved Norway with all his heart. As a young emperor, he had

[101] T.N. Theophil would have meant the Borchardt, Französische Straße, Berlin, a restaurant that was established in 1853 and was a supplier of the emperor.

composed a song called "*Als Fridtjof auf Elida einherzog übers Meer*" ("When Fridtjof on the Elida Roamed across the Sea"),[102] which we sang at school. Now he gave Norway a monument to Fridtjof, which was erected on a promontory in Balestrand. The emperor was also pious. There were regular church services on the fleet, which always opened with the lovely translated Dutch prayer of thanks "*Wir treten zum Beten vor Gott den Gerechten, er schaltet und waltet ein siegreich Gericht*." ("We come to pray before God the Righteous, He rules and holds a victorious judgment.")

We needed to travel at high speeds in our dispatch boats because the mail had to arrive punctually at the Hohenzollern so as not to disrupt the emperor's schedule and to ensure that the letters were dealt with in a timely manner. When there was bad weather, especially fog, this was a difficult task for us commanders. I recall one time going through the fog at high speed with my hand on the siren, setting off its howl at regular intervals. We sailed along next to steep cliffs, on a stretch that I knew well. Depending on how long it took for the echo to come back to me, I headed closer to or farther away from the land. It was very hard on the nerves, but I felt sure of myself, all the more so as I did not need to take ships coming from the other direction into account. As I came alongside the Hohenzollern, the emperor was on the quarterdeck waving at me. He had not needed to wait long; I was more or less on time.

When I was first assigned to the Hohenzollern, I had to report to the emperor. The emperor was very gracious and conversed with me about the views we young officers had concerning certain duty-related questions. Then he suddenly said, "Do you come from a Huguenot family?" "Yes, Sir, your Majesty." "But," the emperor objected, "we haven't heard anything about your family!" I hesitated for a moment, then I answered quickly, "Your Majesty, I will do everything to change that." The emperor was surprised, and then he began to laugh and, slapping me on the shoulder, he said, "I will hold you to it." And I did keep my word and showed him my good will in different ways in the few short years in which he still reigned. He never lost sight of me after that and read my combat reports about the numerous operations I carried out as Half-Flotilla Commander and Flotilla Commander. On one of these reports—I believe it was about the intense nighttime battle near Dover—he wrote "Bravo!" in the margin. This was worth more to me than medals or other decorations. One very dear memory of him comes in the form of a pair of golden cufflinks with his initials on them, which were his gift to me in Norway. If they do not get stolen like so much else, I hope to give them to a grandchild someday.

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[102] C.D. Fridtjof and Elida are the main characters in the epic work "Frithiof's Saga", an Icelandic story from around 1300, set principally in

Before dinner every day, there was always a speech about current affairs. One time, Colonel Dickhuth spoke about the Belle Alliance Battle. When his talk was over, we proceeded to the dinner table. We dispatch boat commanders were ordered to attend the speech and dinner on our free evenings. Between me and the emperor sat the commander of the Hohenzollern, Sea Captain von Karpf. Across from us was an English admiral, who asked me at what distances we carried out our artillery shooting practice. Having heard the question and seeing my hesitation to answer it, the emperor took over: "As I know, we shoot at greater distances than those indicated in the English guidelines." The Englishman then commented on the lecture by Colonel Dickhuth and noted, "We English call it the Battle of Waterloo." With a friendly smile, the emperor again replied, saying, "My dear admiral, it is important to us Germans that it continue to be called the Belle Alliance Battle, as it was in the time of Wellington and Blücher." This response highlights not only how quick on the draw the emperor was but also his human goodness and his political program. In response to what I could only call an unkind comment by his guest sitting across from him, he had only conciliation.

And then the day came when it was time to go home. I had the opportunity to observe how boats were launched from the Hohenzollern. Answering to the boatswain's mate's whistle, all boats were simultaneously hoisted up. The emperor was there in person and was cheering on the men at the boat hoists. All officers and guests were helping to pull. It was a joyful image and jokes were flying back and forth. The emperor was beaming, the men even more. This is the true image of Wilhelm II, who was anything but a despot or an autocrat. He had an inner joy and was a kind man. We torpedo boat commanders, too, had already had the opportunity to partake in the activity. Today we were being commanded to report for duty and had stepped to the quarterdeck with several other specially assigned officers. The ship's boats were above. You could hear the clicking of the anchor chain in the windlass as it was hove up. The emperor was walking back and forth with Admiral von Mueller in front of us. Our own vessels lay abeam. We were itching to get aboard these boats because the later it got, the greater the difficulty. After all, we had to be rowed across in the dinghies and we knew we would feel quite uneasy about this once the vessels' propellers started up. Walking past, the emperor asked me—I had been his right wingman the longest—"What do you want?" I could see the smile in his eyes, so I answered—what else should I have said?—"Your majesty, we request our medals!" The emperor, who knew exactly what was going on, pretended to be surprised and turned to the admiral: "Dear Admiral von Mueller, have you a medal for these young officers?" "Yes, Sir, Your Majesty!" he said, pulling out several leather cases. The emperor then personally pinned the Order of the Red Eagle Fourth

Class on each of us, which, for our relatively low seniority, was a high decoration.[103] And so, my first decorations were bestowed to me by Prince Heinrich and the emperor personally, and thus have a special significance for me.

The emperor could see how happy this made us, and it made him happy as well. Then we took our leave. He thanked us for our service, which had not exactly been straightforward. And then we got into our boats at the very last minute. While we had been waiting, sackfuls of mail had been dropped off on our boats, which I was to deliver to the post office immediately after arriving in Kiel. When we were out of the skerries, we were dismissed and could head to our home ports. We got a move on and soon the Hohenzollern lay behind us, out of sight. Then the weather took a turn for the worse. Because of the mail we were carrying, we had to maintain our speed. With the tide going out, the stern would regularly lift out of the water, but for torpedo boat operators, this was not unusual. One of my propellers, which had been broken and then welded back together, suddenly lost this blade due to its hard pounding on the water. The boat began to vibrate in her joints. It made us very uneasy. Luckily, Skagen was not far off and when we were in the lee of the land, the movements became tolerable and I was able to put into Kiel almost punctually.

But now the misfortune drew near. At the time I was newly engaged. My heart was impelling me toward my bride, who was on the other side of the harbour, in the villa settlement there. And so I instructed my watch officer to call a carriage right away and take the mail to the post office, guarded by personnel. Furthermore, he was to reserve a dock and dock the boat the next morning. The watch officer promised to do everything and I left. However, the watch officer also had a bride, and he too went to her after a short while. The next evening, I was called and a telegram from Sea Captain von Karpf demanded, "Where is the imperial mail? What has happened to it?"

I had a deep sense of foreboding and immediately went to the imperial wharf and down to my room. I threw open my locked cabin. There were the mail bags in peaceful heaps, the way they had been stacked there in Bergen. I was relieved they had not been stolen. Then I personally took them to the central post office in Kiel and sent a telegram to Captain Karpf in Swinemünde, where the Hohenzollern now was: "The royal mail has been delivered to the Central Post Office in Kiel." I was careful not to give the date on which the mail had been posted. Captain Karpf certainly noticed my lie of omission, and he let me know it when I next saw him, waving his

[103] T.N. Handwritten in the left margin of this page (page 129) is "The second dispatch boat commander was Rudi Laks"

finger at me threateningly. He did not, however, let the cat out of the bag, and so I got away with the whole unfortunate affair, which could have done great damage to me. I feel ashamed every time it crosses my mind.

It did, however, bring with it the advantage that a special kind of relationship developed between me and Captain von Karpf—as is likely the case whenever two people share a funny secret. Later, during the war, he was the one who came to my rescue when I had gotten caught in mine fields on the Dogger Bank.

During the war, I saw the emperor several more times, but always with numerous comrades, meaning there was never any kind of personal contact. And then he was in exile in Doorn. I particularly wanted to show him my devotion and loyalty when he was there. And so I sent him various reports whenever I felt I had observed something worth mentioning while on my many travels abroad as a business man. I would like to include one of these reports here:

> *May 11, 1932. Most gracious Emperor and King! I would like to ask your Majesty permission for me to give expression to my most humble thanks for graciously giving me the gift of your picture. Possessing it shall always signify your Majesty's particular benevolence and has made me extraordinarily happy. On behalf of myself and my sons, I vow steadfast allegiance and devotion to the person of your Majesty. We are—also in gratitude for the favour shown toward our Huguenot ancestors—ever prepared to come to the aid of the person of your Majesty. Our hearts and the hearts of many Germans burn with the desire for your Majesty's continued wellbeing. It has been a particular delight to me to receive the picture now as your Majesty had the grace quite exactly fifteen years ago, on April 21, 1917, to bestow me with the Knight's Cross of the House Order of Hohenzollern for a torpedo boat attack against the Dover harbour exit. It was a severe nighttime battle during which two honourable torpedo boats and a significant number of their crew were, unfortunately, lost. But the joy over the deed and over the heavy damage done to the English guard at the Dover-Calais barrier lives on. Still today it lingers in memory, as some devoted and proud letters I have just recently received from the troops of my unit go to show. Deep in their hearts lies the love of the great imperial times. They always express just how much they work toward building a strong Germany for their children and just how much they would welcome the reestablishment of a united Germany, just as it existed under imperial rule.*

When I took my leave in 1919 because I felt myself to be an imperial officer, I became a business man and was often abroad as an international representative of a well-known company. One place I visited various times was the Balkans, which were very interesting politically. As much as this new occupation diverged from my previous one, it did offer me many very interesting perspectives and

insights into situations that would have otherwise remained unknown to me. The situation in the Balkans remains very much undetermined and is in a constant state of unrest. This I noticed particularly in Yugoslavia. The person of the ruler, His Majesty King Alexander, who enjoys general respect and veneration, is, as far as I can surmise, the real constant in the country. The state depends on him for its existence. I am personally in touch with Vice Admiral St,[104] who was named Yugoslavian Commander-in-Chief of the Navy several days ago. He is a Croat, a former aide-de-camp of his Majesty the Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. Last summer, I accompanied him in Germany, which he sincerely appreciates as a country. This is also one of the reasons why I tend our friendship, because it is certainly useful for our poor fatherland to have friends in the other camp. I had previously been in touch with him at various times in Yugoslavia and was once aboard his impeccably kept Donau monitor. On the wharf of H.C. Stülcken in Hamburg, the Yugoslavian navy had a training sailing ship built, which was launched last summer, but further construction was discontinued when the German reparation payments stopped. Now she lies, quite finished, in this shipyard. Following her launch, for which Admiral St. was present, he took the opportunity that arose through my introduction and paid a visit to the German navy chief in Berlin. What was remarkable about this was that he made no secret of his critical views of Italy and therefore announced significant increases to his navy, which were to be passed into law before the conference on disarmament in Geneva. As a consequence, from our side of the affairs it was expressed very plainly that this operation on the part of Yugoslavia ran contrary to the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and would therefore meet with our resistance. St. has just recently represented the interests of his country in Geneva. I have received a rather despondent letter from him dated May 5, in which he writes (an excerpt), 'Dear friend, as a consequence of the current crisis, everything is stagnating. Should I be successful at getting our 'cart' in motion, there will be much to do for me on all sides. But when will that be? *Quien sabe*?' It therefore seems the necessary funds have not been granted.

A Romanian acquaintance, an engineer, told me something remarkable recently: 'You Germans are the only people in the world who have the quality of giving white humanity new forms of life. And so we wait with bated breath for the result of the melting process that at the moment is unfolding in Germany in street riots and fighting in public halls.' I replied that we were very honoured by this respect for Germany, but that this melting was wearing us mighty thin. Instead, one should be giving us more air. 'No,' the

[104] T.N. Here too, Theophil does not provide the full name.

Romanian replied, 'if you do not get roughed up more, you will not melt enough and the cast will not turn out as nicely.' This opinion and understanding is so unique coming from an engineer that it struck me as quite special.

Recently, I received quite an interesting letter from a Swedish comrade in Sweden, who used to be a naval attaché in Berlin, during which time I got to know him. Last year I visited him in his house in Stockholm several times, and one of these times he told me, filled with sincere gratitude, that your Majesty was kind enough to receive him in Doorn. He writes as follows:

> *I can say that in recent times France has become much less popular with us. As is known, people are most sensitive when it comes to their wallets. In this respect, France has not behaved very well toward us. May she suffocate in her gold. We have experienced firsthand how terrible the situation in Germany is, insofar as the company of my brother-in-law, Borsig-Tegel, has stopped all payments. We are very anxious to see how things will develop on the whole in this regard. Personally, I believe that we will have to part company once and for all with the policy of fulfillment.*[105] *Hardly anyone here believes there will be another invasion. But Germany will have to put an end to mismanagement. As long as the country does not save money wherever possible, the other nations will remain untrusting. No country can afford such welfare institutions as are now being afforded in Germany and above all no country can afford such an army of officials who do little or nothing.'*
>
> *May your Majesty in graciousness forgive me for this unsolicited, circuitous excursion, but I have dared to go down this path in the hope that your Majesty might perhaps find it interesting to see from my individual example how the life of an Imperial Naval Officer has taken shape since leaving the navy and how the training that we received during a strong imperial time has contributed to giving form and meaning to our lives.*
>
> *In unwavering devotion, I am your*
> *(Signature)*
> *Imperial Corvette Captain retd.*

The emperor gazes out at me from the picture every day. Provided that it is not lost, it is to be handed down to my descendants. The emperor meanwhile has passed away in exile. King Alexander of Yugoslavia has been murdered in France. What times we live in!

And now I would like to briefly describe my final encounter with the emperor. It was in Holland, where I had spent several weeks

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[105] T.N. Following the Treaty of Versailles, this term referred to Chancellor Gustav Stresemann's response to demands for reparation, an approach that was known as *Erfüllungspolitik.* Stresemann wanted to meet initial demands for reparations so as to re-establish trust and then negotiate for better terms.

closing sizeable deals. At great material costs, I had put on a demonstration of fog devices in the military training area in Soesterberg. The effect was so great that large swaths of the landscape were completely foggy, and the Dutch officer in charge urged me to stop making fog. It was bringing traffic to a halt, and he feared he would soon be in serious trouble. No criticism could have pleased me more and so I was happy to have someone close the sprayer valves. When it was time to go back home to Amsterdam, I got a ride in a Dutch military truck. I was directed to a spot next to the driver and so had an excellent view out the front. Worn out by the exhausting days of preparation, discussions, lectures and finally the demonstration, I dozed off.

All at once, I was awake. Wide awake! In the line of vehicles in the oncoming traffic, I suddenly saw the emperor. He was grey and older, but otherwise unchanged. I jumped up. The emperor was now abeam, looking at me sharply on account of my sudden unexpected movement. There they were again, the splendid blue eyes and, I believed, a slight smile of recognition. And then he was gone. The Dutch soldier looked at me, surprised. He couldn't make rhyme nor reason of my behaviour. Now I was sitting in my corner again, thinking about the past. In my mind's eye was the image of when the emperor first looked me over carefully under the monument of the Great Elector in front of the tennis courts of the naval academy.

As a person, he left nothing to be desired. No one who knew him would be able to hold him responsible for our collapse. "Like a cliff in the sea, his ruler's throne was built on the love of the fatherland, the love of the free man."[106] This was sung by the German people at every opportunity, and the majority did so out of a holy fervour and a firm belief. No, there were different reasons why he, like all of us, had to pay the bill now. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons to the third and fourth generation. The social revolution was approaching, and with it, the rearrangement of society. We wrested technology from the gods as Prometheus took fire. Now we are chained to the rock and every day the eagle comes to tear at our liver. Hercules, the deliverer, came, but he was not—as has been revealed—a deliverer but a corrupter of our people.

It was Hitler who was coming to the fore.

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[106] T.N. Second stanza from Heinrich Harries's song "Heil dir im Siegerkranz." Written for King Christian VII of Denmark in 1790, the song was later adapted to be the unofficial national anthem of the German Empire.

Part Six
Fairy Tales and Romance

Chapter 18
A Dream Come True

A torpedo boat of the type on which Theophil served before World War One. He later commanded one of these boats during the war.

In October 1905, I entered the fleet as a watch and torpedo officer on a ship of the line. I had just turned twenty-four and it was a strange feeling when, after just a few days, I stood alone on the large ship's bridge with only the engine order telegraph operator next to me, along with the helmsman and the most necessary signal personnel. Everyone else was sleeping and the ship was silent.

The composition of officers in the officer corps was particularly harmonious, beginning with the commander who was favourably disposed toward me because he was the brother-in-law of my beloved admiral who had been in charge as I took my first steps in East Asia. At the time, there was a real drive to train personnel. The following year, our ship won the imperial prize in artillery shooting, which was a fiercely fought-over decoration. I had less luck when it came to torpedo shooting. It certainly wasn't ambition that I lacked with respect to this training. And all those beneath me, the torpedo crew and petty officers, were likewise not wanting for enthusiasm. They felt that they were a corps in their own right and this was apparent in their appearance insofar as they had a red tuck around the top of their hats. Something special, in other words. At the time, there was the idea of bringing to bear the torpedo weaponry of the ships of the line in a battle of line against line. And so, the aim was

to shoot torpedoes as rapidly as possible. This meant that we practiced loading quickly over and over. The heavy underwater tubes were equipped with an interlocking mechanism that prevented the breech door from being opened as long as the muzzle door was open. Against the rules, I had had this mechanism disengaged during practice. This saved us a lot of time at the expense of safety, and thus we had very fast fire rate.

And then came the day the fleet commander was to carry out his inspection. This brought with it a certain nervousness on our part. Admirals and their staff were crowded in the broadside room, and everyone was curious about who would hold the record for top speed. Everything was going according to plan and the troop was working in an exemplary fashion. Suddenly, a chain that was used to pull up a torpedo caught on the breech door of the broadside tube. The breech sprang open. A torpedo that had just been loaded slipped out the back, with water gushing out into the broadside room. After all, the muzzle door was open. The breech door could not be closed because the torpedo was jutting out the back and was stuck. The water was rising quickly. First it was up to my knees, then it reached my torso. It was a critical situation. Everyone who didn't belong in the room fled, and all I could see were legs and feet going aloft on Jacob's ladders leading above the armour deck—admirals' legs and the legs of ordinary commoners alike. Summoning all their strength, the torpedo personnel were able to close the muzzle door. This put the ship out of danger. We cleared the armour deck and put dry clothes on. We could not expect much praise. But things turned out more mercifully than we'd expected. In the midst of the criticism, our good will was recognized and the simple conclusion was drawn that our method of increasing the loading speed was not appropriate.

In the summer, it was time for the annual large-scale fleet maneuvers. One night—I had the middle watch and it was a clear, moonlit night—I saw a fog bank approaching. All the ships veered out lines with fog buoys attached, so that each ship had one at its bow. This was very helpful in maintaining our position. And then the tooting began. Every ship and every unit gave its fog signal in a prescribed order. Likewise, changes to the course and speed were communicated with acoustic signals. For laypeople, it is hardly possible to imagine how seamlessly and sensibly all of this is organized and how safe the Grand High Seas Fleet was in the water. In my twenty years of service at sea, not a single accident occurred in the fog.

The next morning the fog suddenly dispersed for a short while and before us in the bright sunshine lay Iceland. It was a magical sight, making us understand the legend of the flickering flames behind which Brunhild dwells and only gives herself to the one who is stronger than she. The poor girl was deceived like many other girls.

Following the completion of all exercises, the fleet put into Norwegian ports. In this way I got to know Norway very well over the course of the next four years, during which time I was in the fleet and on the training ships. I grew to hold this unique country and its residents very dear. However, even back then, we found little favour. Beginning in Trondheim several days after we had made the acquaintance of Iceland, I took a trip to the hotel sanatorium of Fjeldsaeter with a comrade. We, along with our few bags, were transported up the hill on a cart. Fjeldsaeter is a very quiet building. It is mostly made of wood, and has impeccably clean rooms with good bathrooms and simple dining and living rooms for the guests. From the patio, we had an expansive view of the far-reaching forests and the soft valleys. After dinner, everyone sat around the fireplace which was decorated with paintings that depicted witches riding on brooms, much like the German Brocken mountain legend. After we'd made friendly conversation with the Norwegian guests, who had overcome their initial stiffness and aloofness, we went back out onto the patio. Everything was as quiet as a mouse. Dense clouds of fog were coming down from behind, from the mountain. We waited until they reached us. And then we had the feeling that we had an island all to ourselves, cut off entirely from the rest of the world. As we went to sleep, the silence—almost overwhelming at that point and emphasized by the sound of dripping—was interrupted by unusual sounds. It was a herd of reindeer that was enclosing the whole estate. With every step they took, the toes of their hooves would close and produce a small click. The many legs created a constant and very memorable noise.

This lonely paradise would often surface in our minds in the years to come, and every time my travelling companion and I were reunited, each would ask the other if he still recalled the dream-world of Fjeldsaeter. This comrade, too, has long since gone to Valhalla. Now that I'm writing this, I can see before me his angular face, his pointed nose, and I can hear his happy laughter. During the First World War, he was the commander of a submarine. On Armistice Day, the English battleship *Britannia* was sunk by our submarines.[107] Since then, nothing more has been heard from my friend. It is assumed that he was the successful shooter and that he was lost in the effort along with his good men.

After returning to our home harbours, training continued at full force. The focus was on shooting practice, leakage protection, fire extinguishing, and above all internal communication, both on the ship and in the unit. Great care was devoted to this area and it is

[107] T.N. It seems that the *Britannia* was in fact sunk on November 9, 1918, two days before armistice, and that the submarine was able to escape the British counterattack.

amazing what workarounds were found to make sure that control remained firmly in the hands of the respective ship's or unit's command in the event that the normal means of communication failed. We reaped the dramatic successes of these efforts in the Battle of Skagerrak. Our units ran head on into the English line, just as Nelson did when he fought the French-Spanish line near Trafalgar. Our leading ships received terrible fire from all enemy broadsides and suffered great damage, for example our lead, the battle cruiser Seydlitz. To allow Admiral von Hipper to transfer over onto the second ship of his unit, it was necessary to give the leading ships a fifteen-minute respite. This took place by means of an extremely simple movement, which, however, no other navy practiced back then. The fleet commander flew a striped green or striped red flag on his flagship from the rear armoured turret on a flagpole that had been prepared for the purpose. The opponent could not see this. This signal was instantly repeated all the way to the final ship, which then turned to starboard or port, steering an opposite course. As soon as the changed course of the final ship was observed by the second-last ship, this ship too turned to steer an opposite course until the entire line had followed the movement and, one by one, was lost to the opponent like grains of sand in an hourglass. After a quarter of an hour and regrouping, there came the second, famous attack by our fleet, which brought severe damage to the British.

Back then, I also devoted much attention to back-up plans for internal command communication on my torpedo boats. The success of the weapon depended entirely on the skill and effective presence of the torpedo officer on the bridge. We devised a very simple method to communicate my absence to the second torpedo officer in the headquarters under the armour deck and to get him to come up immediately: a potato was thrown down the speaking tube. When practicing, I was a "dead man" when I put my hat on backwards and could not do anything anymore. Here, the second torpedo officer would soon be on the spot, taking my place. Naturally, we had other back-up plans to ensure the communication of commands, but the potato seems to have been the most original idea.

During this time, a wedding of some relatives was celebrated in one of the large Rhineland cities. They were wealthy families and the celebrations were illustrious. The Rhineland humour sparkled. The bride and groom were both widowed. Let's call her Meyer and him Müller.[108] They each had children; the bride's son was a smart high school student. Various speeches were being delivered, many of which were quite funny. And then the young Meyer lad gets up unexpectedly, taps on his glass, and says the following:

[108] T.N. "Jonger" or "Jongen" is written in the margin here.

There's my father sitting over there and his name is Müller. And there are my siblings and their name is Müller. And there's my mother and her name is Müller. And here I am, my mother's son, and my name is Meyer. I guess this would make anyone say, "Now that's mother's little malheur!" This speech was by far the best and the salvos of laughter hardly came to an end.

One night when I did not have watch, I was sleeping soundly and comfortably in my berth in my cabin. To my great annoyance, a lot of noise woke me up at midnight. I could hear men walking back and forth. Commands were ringing out, whistles were blown to call the watch officer. After some time, things settled back down and I went back to sleep. The next morning, my batman woke me up. To my surprise, I learned that an ammunition storeroom below me had caught fire. Two bronze cartridge cases had begun to melt. The water that had been used to flood the ammunition storeroom must have prevented an explosion at the very last moment. If it hadn't, I certainly would have been blown sky-high and our ship as well. A disaster had been averted just in time thanks to the decisive action of the watch officer and the good work of the personnel. The ship had to be taken to the shipyard to make the necessary repairs after the fire and above all to discover the cause. It turned out that the source was an electrical short-circuit. One should not be superstitious, but I have often observed the dual nature of such cases.

At the time, my second torpedo officer was Ensign Wassil. He came from a family from eastern Germany who were originally of Polish origin. He wasn't a bad person, but he was comfort-loving and not interested in his occupation. And so I had my difficulties with him, all the more as I was not much older than he. Nevertheless, we had a normal relationship without tension. Some evenings we'd sit around together with comrades in the mess hall and have an enjoyable time. Of course, in the shipyard everything got into a tangle. Half of us got our shore leave during this time. After our daily duties had been completed—that is, when the shipyard workers had disembarked—everyone went ashore, including Wassil. We guessed that he led a pretty loose life, but he kept to himself, didn't have a friend, and no one knew anything about what he got up to.

One day he was missing. In the afternoon, men were sent to his apartment on land. He wasn't there and his landlady couldn't provide any information. The next day a call from a village on the Kaiser-Wilhelm Canal was placed via the shipyard communication switchboard. A dead man had been found who, going by his identity papers, belonged to the ship. Because I was also the judicial officer, I notified the squadron court. With a court martial councillor, I rented a horse-drawn box cart in which we packed bundles of straw and a sail. Then we set off. The two horses quickly took us to our

destination. The mayor of the village led us to a paddock, and behind a hedge row lay Wassil, stiff and dead. Blood had issued from a wound in his forehead created by a revolver shot. It had run down his face and dried, disfiguring him massively. The court martial councillor established beyond the shadow of a doubt that this was a case of suicide. We wrapped the body in the sailcloth and then lifted it and carried it to the cart, bedding him down on the bundles of straw. The return home was dreadful. I brooded over whether I had paid enough attention, about whether this comrade might perhaps still be alive had I shown more sympathy and interest. We drove with our sad burden to the navy hospital in the deepest silence and dropped off the dead man in the morgue. The court martial investigation yielded a gloomy picture of the dead man. He was deep in debt and had made false statements about his debits and credits. Ultimately, what did him in were girls and alcohol.

Now I had to carry out the sad tasks that are always to be taken care of in such cases. This kept me on my toes for three days and constantly reminded me of what had happened. Then, finally, there was the military funeral procession. Again, I had to be in command. Again, I marched behind the coffin next to crying relatives and, to bid goodbye to our comrade, I again had to give the command, "Make ready. Present. Salvo Fire, men!" The shadow of this incident would loom over me and my comrades for a long time to come.

Beautiful is the sight of a sailing fleet at night, when, after the evening exercises are done, the lights are burning merrily everywhere you look, when signals are being sent with the three colourful lanterns of the nighttime signalling device, when floodlights and Morse signals illuminate the darkness of the night and when the green and red side lanterns and the white steamship lanterns are aglow on all the ships. When carrying out the great fleet exercises, the advance and retreat always took place in the Belts, and occasionally also through the Kattegat and the Sound. Getting through these straits with the heavy ships demanded excellent nautical and navigational skills and now and then a commander would run aground and was sometimes dismissed as a result. Going through them with many ships in a row made it even more difficult to keep oriented because the direction lights were obscured by the ships ahead and behind and by the smoke from the funnels. Thus, there was always a great sigh of relief whenever one had successfully left this Scylla and Charybdis behind and either had an open course ahead in the Baltic Sea or Skagen was abeam.

At the name Skagen, I am impelled to interrupt these descriptions for a moment. I must discuss Skagen, to which I am connected by so many memories. It is a small Danish fishing town with low-slung houses because the winter storms are so fierce there. The North and Baltic Seas come together there and as far as I'm

concerned it is the best seaside town with bathing culture and bathing tourism anywhere close to us. A nice hotel accommodates the guests, who all come for rest and relaxation, not to show off their ballgowns. The hotel is built in the simple, unpretentious style of Scandinavian countries, as I often found in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Directly in front is the endless, wide sandy beach, the most beautiful beach the heart could desire. The long beach grass bends in the wind like waves, and endless dunes stretch out far to the west to the notorious Jammerbugt, which means "Bay of Sorrow," in which so many terrible nautical tragedies have taken place. Standing there, you have a vast, unimpeded view all the way out across the North Sea. Not far offshore lies the lightship *Skagen Rev*, which is very firmly anchored to resist the winter gales. Many a dreadful fate has unfolded near the lightship, while her crew was powerless to help. The shipwrecks lie in abundance all around, and on the chart, they form a dense collection of dots; in the Imperial Navy, the moniker "caviar chart" has been given to the map. Dot upon dot, wreck upon wreck. But on the whole, an exquisite sense of calm prevails there and thus it is truly a place of tranquility. In the dunes lies a grave which bears the simple inscription "Holger Drachmann's Grave".[109] He too must have experienced the magic of this place as I did and now his artist heart is dreaming of being resurrected.

I cannot say how often I sailed around Skagen, but I will never forget my first independent sail as watch officer on our oldest and first torpedo boat. This nutshell had even been equipped with an armour deck and when there was wind it sailed more under the water than on it. The only protection for the watch officer was a very small tower with a narrow shield. One had to operate the engine order telegraph oneself. Halfway beneath you, inside the tower, stood the helmsman. The man standing watch was tied to the tower with a wide leather strap. When you rounded Skagen, coming from the Baltic Sea, there was no longer any protection from the land against the strong westerly winds, and so you'd get into quite the dance. You'd strain your way through, yawing and pitching. An old navy song featured the mocking verse, "Rounding Skagen, rounding Skagen, take a towel for your collar." If you didn't do that, water would run down your neck and gradually soak through all protective layers under your rubberized coat and Sou'wester and run into your boots. This all felt unusual during this first sail, but one gets used to anything, even this. It wasn't possible for one watch officer to relieve another of his duties. No one would dare cross the deck. Giving rudder commands was not possible either. And so, the custom developed of giving the helmsman his instructions with the foot. One kick meant

[109] C.D. Holger Drachmann was a Danish writer and artist, 1846-1908, who was much admired in his time but whose popularity has since faded.

"rudder to starboard", two kicks meant "rudder to port". Nobody thought anything of it and no one would have interpreted this as the mistreatment of a subordinate. The helmsmen were all old seamen used to small vessels, and they knew the extreme hardship of the seafaring life from fishing. Just recently, there had been a harrowing accident involving another small torpedo boat. The commander, the Duke of Mecklenburg was run over by a stern wave, which tipped the boat on her nose, capsized her, and then she went down. Some people got out of the capsized boat and reported that the duke had been brave and pious as he faced death, and had been there for his men in an exemplary fashion.

All of these things were on my mind throughout this long, anxious night when I had my baptism of fire with the stormy elements. How overjoyed I was when, finally, the beacon of Heligoland, that faint arm of light on the horizon, reached out for me, connecting me once again with life and the rest of humanity. Then it was time to drop anchor between the island Düne and the main island and fall into my berth in the cabin that was so low you could only get dressed and undressed while hovering in a squat position. And then came the deep sleep, long into the next afternoon.

Then I had myself rowed to shore in the dinghy and I set foot on this fairy-tale island for the first time. I say "fairy-tale" because it was a free port and duty-free goods from all over the world abounded there. Sparkling wine, soap, canned and dried foods, spirits, whisky, wines from every country, woolen goods, plaids, cloth—in short everything a modern person needs and desires. Everything could be purchased and enjoyed without import duty. I can still see the cheerful summertime hubbub in the streets when I was there later on. Everyone in the world was, as is the custom in southern countries, seated at tables in front of the restaurants and shops, drinking coffee and excellent spirits, enjoying sparkling wine with caviar and buns, or else they were looking for pleasing fabrics or clothes off the rack. Of course, this fairy-tale-like situation also made smuggling tempting. But while the odd item might have been successfully sneaked through, there was never any organized smuggling, for one thing because it was too easy for the customs authorities to carry out thorough checks. After all, everything arrived and left only by boat, and this was easy to oversee. And secondly, in that decent era, people's attitudes were not suited to dishonesty on a large scale. People were wealthy enough that they were unwilling to blot their good bourgeois reputation for the sake of ignominious advantages. Self-discipline was too great. It really was this way, and now one tells one's grandchildren about this time as if it had been a fairy tale: "Once, people were decent, and the ruler was decent too, and all was well and everyone was satisfied. Then came evil and no one made sure

that *'nihil mali intret'*."[110] And so the fairy tale devolves into a twilight of the gods. The rule of Loki[111] began and will not be shaken off until the great inner purification has been brought to completion.

Back then during my first visit to Heligoland, the early spring winds were blowing and there were hardly any beachgoers. I had preened myself to go ashore and had even thrown my cape over my splendid lieutenant's uniform. I might have looked like the cock of the walk. After eating a rich, first-class meal, I went up to the large bridge in the early darkness so as to whistle for my dinghy. I stopped for a moment to look at the wonderful sky and watch the sun slowly go to bed. Suddenly two soft arms reached around me from behind and Potiphar's wife[112] tried to woo me. This was an unusual and surprising situation. And it was strange. All my male instincts revolted within me: a man wants not to be caught but to conquer! It didn't suit me and almost disgusted me that a female creature would push herself upon me so much. So, I exchanged a few short, cool words with her and went back onboard full of pride. The funny thing was, she was pretty and well-mannered.

I visited Heligoland many more times and thus I would like to remember the lovely aquarium. All the marine animals that are found in the local waters could be seen there, moving behind large glass panes illuminated from the inside. A little-known fact is that the aquarium even held a small kind of shark. Occasionally in a winter storm, a real shark is tossed ashore, or a whale. But this is rare.

Something that was a world unto itself was the bird observatory, managed by ornithologists. Small trees and bushes were carefully pruned and on them migratory birds came to rest, treating themselves to a break on their long journeys. Our feathered friends from warm Africa and from the Arctic dropped off their calling cards there. Special equipment also allowed them to be caught. Then they would be banded and released again. In this way, their flights could be traced to draw conclusions about their migratory patterns. Among these birds, there were regulars at the hotel and happy-go-lucky passers-by, just like with people.

That was the first time I was fully in charge while sailing around Skagen. And here is another memory: this was during my command on a ship of the line as a watch and torpedo officer. The squadron with the respective flotillas and tenders had anchored near Skagen

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[110] T.N. "No evil will enter."

[111] T.N. Loki is a character from Norse mythology. Since the 18th century, he was often attributed the role of the devil, who pretends to be the friend of the gods.

[112] C.D. Potiphar's wife appears in the Book of Genesis, where she attempts to seduce Joseph and then, enraged by his rejection, falsely accuses him of rape, leading to his imprisonment.

while taking a break while performing a maneuver. As the flagship of the Second Admiral, we lay at the very end of the very long line of ships. Suddenly, there was a long flag signal. My commander had me called to his cabin and ordered me to immediately report to the squadron commander, who was summoning me through this flag signal. The commanding officer was very concerned about me because I had recently defended a comrade before a disciplinary tribunal. This incident had a history dating back years. One of the Fähnrichs who was ordered to go to East Asia with me years earlier was the son of a commanding admiral. Before our departure from the German harbour back then, I had received a letter from this admiral asking me to keep a kindly and watchful eye on his son, who had a reckless streak. I faithfully lived up to this task, and the years in the Far East, which admittedly had a seductive side, went by without complaint. Then my protégé of those days became a watch officer like me on a different ship of the line in the same squadron. Unfortunately, in this setting he came into the company of a reckless and, as it would turn out, utterly unstable comrade. The two of them had—and this was completely unheard of in the fleet—played for money while getting drunk and in the end my friend was accused by his fellow player of cheating. What followed was scandalous, with those present just barely able to pry the two apart as they tried to kill each other. A disciplinary tribunal was held. The father came to Kiel and in his concern asked me if I would defend his son. I then devoted myself to doing so and composed a well-thought-out defense, which I left with the judges of the tribunal after the trial. But with my youthful lack of experience, I made the mistake of not simply defending my client but of casting doubt on the honourableness of his opponent. That I was right in making this claim would only come out a year later. My client was simply discharged in punishment, went to German East Africa, became a successful farmer and in the end fought courageously under Lettow-Vorbeck.[113] His neck bore the memory of this fight, with scars from where he was struck with a bush knife. After the Second World War, he died in an English concentration camp in South Africa. He was a man of violence, light, and not built to live in European circumstances.

My commanding officer had guessed right. After a long commute on the steam pinnace along the long line of ships, I was taken to the squadron commander and was received by him in the presence of his chief of staff and his flag lieutenant. The otherwise so kind admiral, later Fleet Commander, who knew me and liked me, was now stiff and formal. He took a piece of paper in his hand and read me a cabinet order of the highest degree. It expressed displeasure with the

[113] T.N. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck was commander of the German colonial troops in East Africa from 1914 to 1918.

way I had formulated my defense and criticized my attack on the honour of a comrade, namely the man who had been my friend's opponent. It said that I had overstepped the authority of a defender, and this was to be communicated to me. The world spun around me. Swallowing hard and in all likelihood looking as white as a sheet, I came out with the words, "This must mean, Your Excellence, that I am to say my farewell?" The answer was, "No, this is a lesson to you which no one will know about aside from your superiors." The admiral gave the piece of paper to his flag lieutenant. Then he turned back to me and said:

> *This is all there is to this incident. Now I will speak to you as your squadron commander. If I should ever meet with adversity myself, I will choose you to come to my defense. You put yourself on the line when you came to the defense of your comrade in a way one would expect from a friend. You are a selfless and true comrade.*

Then he shook my hand and bid me goodbye with a kind smile. My emotions were in chaos. I only felt one thing clearly: an incredible feeling of joy over the kindness of my superior, who had brightened the lesson I had been taught, and although I hadn't seen it coming, I now fully accepted it as justified in every regard. Henceforth, I was devoted to this kind admiral with a bond of love. When he was seriously ill during the war, he fulfilled his duty to the fullest. In the midst of tremendous effort and responsibility, he departed this world in his cabin on his flagship as Fleet Commander after brief hours of suffering. I would defy anyone to build an officer corps of such mettle.

And here another memory of Skagen resurfaces and flutters through my mind. With an inviting gesture, it beckons me to write it down. It was the 16th of July, 1914, the day our first son was born. In the night of the 14th to 15th, it had become clear that this new member of the human race was going to bless the Earth with his presence in several hours. During the night, I was able to alert the wise woman, the midwife, and she came to us at daybreak. Around 6 am, I called my wife's mother and she too arrived several hours later. I had to leave the house at 7 am because at 8 we were to leave port to perform our summer maneuvers in the North Sea. Anyone who has been a happy young husband will understand me when I say that I experienced this separation from my family at this moment as cruel. Mixed with my concern for my wife was my joy over becoming a father soon, which I felt particularly keenly as a man who had been orphaned young, who felt so lonely. The northbound sail was torturous. I had delusional ideas and thought about horrifying stories I'd heard of first births. There certainly wasn't a whole lot anyone could do with me as I sat fretting on the bridge and didn't dare come down.

Then, in the early morning hours of the 16th of July, a semaphore message came down the line from the fleet flagship:

> *Captain Lieutenant G., Commander of the Torpedo Boat Half Flotilla x: Healthy boy born. Mother and child well. G. granted leave to take lead boat to Skagen harbour to send telegram to wife. Fleet Commander.*

Never before had I squirmed out of the formation so quickly, arriving at the harbour in Skagen in no time flat. The sun had come up and was beginning to gain strength, turning everything to gold. The small post office had just opened and the post mistress was surprised to find a German naval officer standing at the wicket in front of her. I told her my good news and begged her to connect me by telephone to my apartment in Kiel. She made a touching effort to do so, and I didn't have to wait long before I had the midwife on the line, who repeated the good news and promised to pass on word for word my passionate good wishes for my beloved wife and the little boy. Beaming with joy and filled with gratitude, I left the friendly post mistress and went to lie down on a little bench in a grove of short coniferous trees in the dunes. Above me was nothing but the blue summer sky and the sun now shone brightly. The dune grass was singing its soft whooshing song of peace, accompanied by the songs of a close-by woodlark and a skylark. Never before had I had such a feeling of happiness. All my dreams had come true. I had a family, a dear wife and now a boy. I had a wonderful profession and had secured a good future for myself with dedication and competence. Alongside the income from my profession, my inheritance allowed us to live comfortably. Oh, how promising and happy the future looked. Feeling this extraordinary joy, I spent a whole hour in the marvellous quiet around me, becoming quiet myself and full of thanks. I sent an ardent prayer of thanksgiving up to the heavens.

Fourteen days later, I went into action in the First World War. "Look here, it's me."[114] Like Bajazzo, I sing my woeful song.

[114] T.N. "Schaut her, ich bins (Bajazzo)" was a song written by Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919) for his opera *Pagliacci*.

Theophil and his naval officer compatriots in what appears to be a boistrous celebration. He is third from the left with eyes closed

A photo from Theophil's collection, presumed to be of his cabin on an unknown ship (probably the Hansa). Note the extent to which he has added personal touches to make it homey, note also the rifle and shotgun on the wall.

Chapter 19
Love and Loss

In the fall of 1907, my posting with the fleet came to an end. First, I went to the naval academy as a teacher and then as a sea cadet officer on a training sailing ship the following spring. I was able to enjoy once more the magic of a sailing ship, taking the same route to the West Indies that I had sailed nine years before. Indeed, the experience was more impressive and more enjoyable because the conditions in which I lived were significantly more comfortable than those of a sea cadet.

I devoted myself to my sea cadets with my entire soul. The bond I had with them was one of robust comradery, almost friendship I might say. I still remember the pain I felt when the training year was over and I had to part company with them. I did not hand them anything on a platter; they had to work hard for everything. But I did give them my heart and they could feel that. In the beginning, I had to struggle to assert my authority, which was an interesting and exciting process. After all, they were a corps consisting of sixty sea cadets who not only had to learn military procedures hour after hour, day after day, but also had to be taught how to think and behave properly with each other and with their superiors. Teaching with an iron fist erodes trust, but on the other hand, too much mildness is also harmful because in that case the gaggle of sea cadets, who are full of energy and come from the nation's elite, will soon walk all over the teacher. We all recall this struggle for authority from our school days.

The test for me, the crucial moment in this silent wrestling match, came a few weeks after the first training year started. We were at anchor in a Norwegian fjord. Beside us, the cliffs rose almost vertically, hundreds of meters high. When it was time for the sea cadets' shore leave, I made it clear that they were not to go on any climbing expeditions. During the evening muster, two cadets were missing: a prince—a close relative of the emperor—and his closest friend, a dashing but unruly comrade. I had to report their absence to the commanding officer, who did not exactly have an excess of amiability. We sought out mountaineers among the crew, who prepared as much as they could for a climbing expedition that would allow them to bring the missing men back on board. Soon afterwards, both the rescuers and the rescued appeared. The latter were filthy, and clearly had some trials and tribulations behind them. I got all the sea cadets out of their hammocks and got them to report for muster, forming a rectangle. In front of everybody, I had the two delinquents report on their experiences. Full of pride, they pointed

to the highest peak. Up there, they had flown their handkerchief as proof of their summit. Through the telescope, I could see that it was true. All of the cadets' eyes were aglow. It seemed as if they were indeed walking all over me. In a very cool manner, I gave the two exhausted men the order to climb back up to the peak and retrieve the handkerchief, which, after all, was imperial property. Seldom in my life have I seen anyone so surprised. The cadets had been prepared for all kinds of reactions—yelling, pack drills, detention—just not this. Just as they were, the two of them, having only received some sandwiches, had to go immediately back on shore. It was a kill-or-cure remedy, and the two didn't return until after dawn the next day, staggering more than walking. I couldn't say who was more exhausted, the two of them or myself, who had tossed and turned all night. But I had won. The three of us became the best of friends. Henceforth, my cadets blindly clung to me, confiding every worry in me as their older friend.

During this time, I took on an unusual financial investment with my friend[115] and comrade. Our line of thinking here was that after we were finished serving in the navy—likely when we would be about fifty years old—we didn't want to be retired layabouts. We did thorough research and decided to found and finance a plantation. We hired a comrade who, for a reason I've forgotten, had to give up going to sea. We chose British Nyasaland[116] as the location for the plantation, more specifically the mountainous southern peak in the area around Blantyre. This was a good location as transportation to the coast of Portuguese Mozambique along the Zambezi river and its tributary was cheap. The whole enterprise was a great success. Our former comrade proved to be a very capable planter. After doing a thorough inspection, he bought a sizeable piece of land and got to work with good machines and good workers. Buildings and sheds were erected. I still recall the photographs of the bungalow, which looked so charming that it positively beckoned you to come for a visit. The climate where the plantation was located—about fifteen degrees south latitude, at an altitude of more than 1000 meters—was favourable insofar as it cooled down at night and you could get a restful sleep. Everything grew beautifully and after we had put a total of about 80,000 marks into the project, the great moment came when the first harvest was to be shipped, bringing a profit and pecuniary relief. When the steamship carrying our hopes was on its way

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[115] T.N. Here, in the margin on page 148, there is a handwritten note: "hardt." If this refers to the friend, perhaps being part of a longer name such as "Eberhardt" or "Erhardt", it could be a later correction—likely not by Theophil himself—because he refers to this friend as Hermann at the end of this paragraph. It might also indicate the friend's family name.

[116] C.D. The former Nyasaland is now Malawi.

to our homeland, the First World War broke out. The British took over the shipment and the plantation. If the war hadn't happened, the business would have become a highly valuable asset for our families and Hermann and I would have had wonderful work in our sunset years. But one must not rail against the past. The only thing I *am* curious about is who is stretching out his legs under the desk in our navy plantation these days.

On the training ship, I found a dear friend in the ship's pastor. Peter[117] also had Huguenot origins and was a first-class soldier's pastor. He joined in on all the fun. But he always stayed within the limits that were prescribed by his position. Peter Lo, as we called him, later married my wife and me, and christened our second son. This was on Reformation Day in 1919 in the rotunda of the so very lovely house of his grandfather, who was my wife's father. I still recall our dear son on his baptismal cushion decorated with flowers, taking a peek at life with curious eyes. Oh, how this life would be snuffed out so early!

I could write volumes about this final voyage of mine on a sailing ship. But it was also so similar in many ways to the previous trip of nine years earlier, which I have described, that I would only like to address one particular event. At the time, the luxury ship Victoria Luise, which belonged to one of our large shipping companies, was offering luxury voyages to the West Indies. The captain was a well-known and pleasant man. The ship was to sail into Kingston, Jamaica one night. Entering the harbour, the beacon could not be made out. The captain changed his course because he assumed that he had made a navigational error. Immediately thereafter, the ship ran aground, rising up high above the beach. The captain made sure that all passengers and personnel got to shore safely. He himself stayed behind on board and shot himself. And it was not his fault at all! An earthquake had toppled the lighthouse and had caused severe damage in the city. We arrived sometime later. There was human misery all around. I was sent ashore to offer my help to the English authorities. I can still see the English officer sitting in front of me. He wore white shorts and a short-sleeved white shirt unbuttoned down to his navel. Next to him was a bottle of whisky and a towel, with which he constantly soaked up the sweat that was running down his chest in rivulets. He kept topping up his glass of whisky. The tropics had wreaked havoc on him; he had reached the end of his abilities. A human ruin.

I experienced a similar case in East Asia. An unhappy comrade who sailed a very small vessel that lacked all comforts in the unbearable heat began living with the bottle. In fact, his day began with

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[117] T.N. Again, there is a handwritten fragment here (also page 148), which seems to indicate Peter's family name, possibly "Lorenz".

him brushing his teeth with Moselle wine and gargling with it because the water was contaminated. The wine bottle was always within reach. A liver condition brought his life to an early end.

The following year, I took the next year's cadets to the Mediterranean on a cruiser. In Messina, I experienced the aftermath of the awful earthquake that had reduced the city to rubble a few months earlier. A guide showed us a pile of rubble under which he said his whole family lay buried. At the German consul's, who lived just outside the city on a hill, the damage had already been repaired. His daughter told us that she had woken up when a piece of stucco had fallen from the ceiling onto her mosquito netting. Because Mount Etna rumbled quite frequently, she had gone outside right away as a precaution. Immediately thereafter, the roof had collapsed. When we in our astonishment asked whether the family wasn't perhaps tiring of all this and might prefer to live somewhere else, she laughed and replied that one gets used to everything and that it was so beautiful there that nobody would leave of their own free will.

Wonderful, unforgettable days followed in Taormina. In the background stood Mount Etna, covered in snow. In front of our hotel were the ruins of the Greek theatre and everywhere there were roses and violets. In the catacombs of Palermo, we saw the grinning heads of thousands of shrunken mummies. Grotesque contrasts.

In Algeria, our young assistant doctor came back on board quite shaken, and would not go back on shore after he had seen how a jealous girl had gunned down her disloyal beau. He wasn't willing to take shore leave again until we had reached the next port.

For me, going to Venice was a deeply stirring experience. The city's extraordinary uniqueness and beauty opened my eyes and my heart. Every day we went to museums, churches and picture galleries, to the glass blowers in Murano and finally to the beautiful property of the Bianci family in the Po Valley. We had an invitation almost every night to one of the old families' palazzos. It was on one of these occasions that I became acquainted with Theresa, who would be in my thoughts and my heart for the whole year. One evening she stood before me. It was as if I'd had an electric shock. She was tall, slender, with beautiful blond hair, blue eyes and a grace that was coupled with charm and kindness. I knew immediately that everything I wished for in a woman was united in her. At the time, I was a young man who was certainly also good-looking. My prodigious means allowed me certain luxuries. A fire was sparked inside her as well. It was as if we were brought together by providence. In the next six months, we clung to each other and I didn't let a free minute go by in which I wasn't with her. We danced together in the evenings, lost in our dreams. I recall one evening in particular which we spent in the palazzo of an acquainted family on the Grand Canal. Theresa had composed a waltz for me. Its melody still goes around

in my head and it completely stirred me up at the time. We went out onto the balcony. Below us was the Canal Grande and a sea of houses belonging to this strange city of the barcarolle, whose music as rendered by Hoffmann[118] had always transfixed me. Now I believed I was experiencing this music first hand. We stood next to each other for a while, quiet and happy. The world melted away around us and our hands found each other. An endless feeling of gratitude filled me. Her sister Gioconda, who no doubt knew what was going on, came out at that point like a guardian angel and got us to come back in with everybody.

Theresa's parents lived in a small palazzo near the San Giovanni and Paolo church. Her father was an Englishman and a painter. Her mother, an exceptional beauty, was Italian with a lively spirit and great kindness, as one only finds with very great people. Theresa and Gioconda had inherited these good traits from their parents, and their upbringing and education were of the kind that one only finds in such surroundings. When we said goodbye, it tore at our hearts. An image of her followed me on my travels through the Mediterranean, which led to further trips eastward to Asia Minor and Egypt. Even the very lively and fascinating scenes, even the care for my cadets who of course knew what was going on—all that could not wake me from my dream. I saw Theresa everywhere, thoughts of her filled me. Several months later, when we were in Sicily again for some time, I tried to bow out and go on leave in Venice. Unfortunately, my effort was in vain. Given my strict training duties and my obligation to take care of my cadets, my commanding officer, who likely suspected the reason for my request and had complete understanding for it in his great benevolence, was forced to turn me down. And so, I had to endure my aching heart. There was no end to our letters to each other. In this way I learned that the parents with their two daughters had gone to spend a few months in London. Hardly had I returned to Kiel that I made the firm decision to go to London regardless of the cost to ask her and her parents for her hand in marriage. Fate was on my side insofar as I had been recruited to supervise the sailor division, that is to say I was listed there and only had several hours of supervising drills. So, in order to be permitted a longer leave, I decided to have an operation done on varicose veins on my lower legs. The leave of several weeks had hardly been approved and I was already boarding the train, a reckless young man, bound for London without license. I could have ruined my entire career with this stunt. It was just a few years before the war and no German officer was allowed to go to England without being officially registered with the naval attaché of the English Navy Board. If you weren't, you were

[118] T.N. Theophil errs. The music of the gondoliers is featured in Jacques Offenbach's opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

considered a spy. So, not hesitating for a moment, I exposed myself to this suspicion and all its possible consequences. Love moves mountains and makes a young man who is otherwise quite sensible blind to all dangers.

In London we met according to plan. Our reunion was exquisite; the whole world melted away and I was the happiest person on Earth. But I could soon feel that something wasn't right. The expressions on the faces of her parents and Gioconda were not as happy as they had been in Venice. Theresa also had tears in her eyes from time to time. And then came our walk in Hyde Park, which changed everything. All my love swelled up within me. My entire soul opened toward her and she could see right in. I told her of my deep loneliness, about how I yearned for a family and a wife whom I could love without limits. I wanted to devote my whole life to her and wanted in return only her love. I will never forget the look she granted me, the bottomless love and affection. Then came the satyr play. Theresa told me they'd only come to London because of her and because of me, to consult a well-known doctor. Having seen her delicate constitution, he had given her the provisional judgement that she was unfit for marriage. The barcarolle I had heard so often resounded in my head. In the course of a year, her fate played out. She was ferried over into the beyond. A deep scar was left on my heart.

For me, things actually went much as they did with Goethe. Women shook me up violently and every real encounter with one of them brought with it a hard struggle for me. It is a fine thing if you can say: "That is how I am akin to Goethe." In this way you can transfer something of his divinity to your own account and the eyes of young girls will look at you with interest when you tell stories from your wellspring of experience, and in spite of all the growth rings you have acquired as an aging tree, you are now and again still tempted to flutter your eyes at someone. "And so, you should not, old lively one, be sad. Your hair may be white, but still you shall love."[119] With his wife, my friend Walter Cramer, who was killed by Hitler, wrote these words in our guest book on February 7, 1943, and he stated almost enviously that he knew of no other man our age who had such an impact on women as I. As I've said, I'll happily confirm this—it's just my Goethean characteristic. And after all I, too, was able to write little poems from time to time which I myself—and this is the funny part—found quite nice.

After our walk, I went back to my hotel in London to process the substantial blow, which was all the more difficult because I knew that Theresa was suffering its impact even more than I. She had loved me from the very bottom of her wonderful heart.

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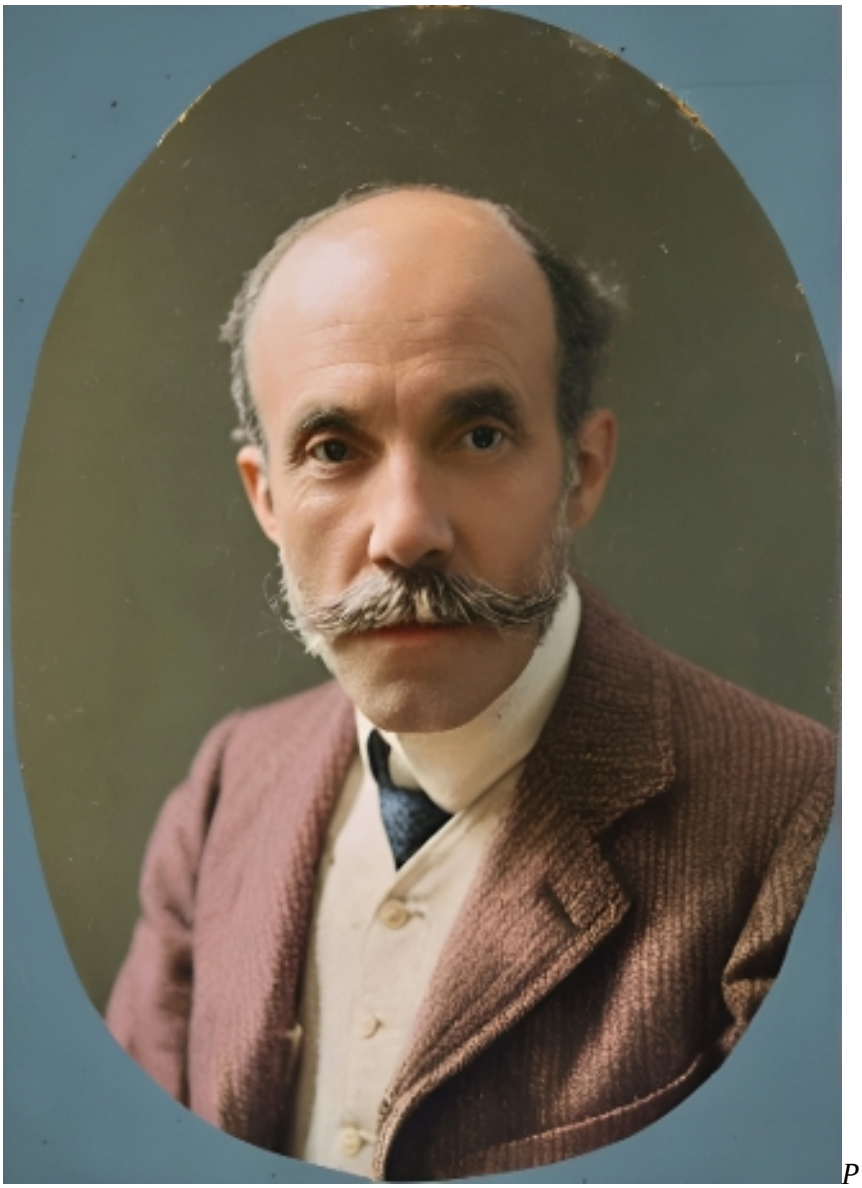
[119] T.N. A quote from Goethe's "West-East Divan".

This was all during the time of the death of King Edward VII, "The Peacemaker." Adorned with flowers, his picture was up in every display window, featuring the stereotypical caption. As a distraction, I went to Windsor and walked past the dead king's coffin. The sense of mourning bespoke my own darkened mood. The next day, having written some words of farewell to my love, I travelled back home. To have said goodbye in person once more would have been a spiritless affair. We were already suffering enough.

After this, I spent several weeks in the hospital recovering from my operation. This was good, because it gave me some time to find my courage again. When I was once more fit for travel, I went to St. Moritz and spent six weeks recovering physically and psychologically. Once I attempted to reach the Piz Bernina summit but had to turn back three quarters of the way due to inclement weather. I still recall the magnificence of the sunset I experienced with my guide. Below us, the world had disappeared in fog, from which only the hoary yet curious heads of the peaks rose up into the sun.

At that time, I got to know some Americans at the hotel, and we had a lively exchange. An older gentleman from the group put his hand on my shoulder one day and asked me, "When are we going to go to war together against the British? Do you have a good fleet? Hurry up and get it ready!" And so, I was forced to come back to Earth, with all her tragic excitements. Once again, I was experiencing what it means to be human and to love purely on the one hand while on the other hand seeing hate, animosity and murderous war preparations. I became very conscious of the tremendous conflict of our time, which will certainly lead to enormous changes in our social organization.

After the First World War, I climbed Lorette hill in Northern France, and there I encountered the senselessness. A cousin of mine had fallen there. His body simply decayed in no man's land. The slopes of the hill are covered in an ocean of graves. Crosses, nothing but crosses in rank and file, separated according to the nations that took part in the slaughtering. At the top of the hill, there is a small church through which a line of visitors was passing when I was there. Likely they were the relatives of the dead who were sleeping out there in the open. My gaze fell on a banner that went around the crypt: "*Ils ont combattus sans haine*"—"They fought without hate!" In fact, why did they fight? What was the meaning of it all? Dear God, deliver us from evil: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever! Amen.



Philipp Lieder, father of Elsbeth Lieder, whom Theophil married in 1913. Philipp was a man of great wealth as a merchant of Krupp guns that he and his partners sold to the Chinese in the Sino-Japanese War in the 1890s. His many entrepreneurial accomplishments included construction of the Prince Heinrich Hotel in Tsingtao (still standing), as well as a railroad.

Part Seven

Marriage, War and Revolution

Chapter 20

The Start of a Marriage; The Start of a War-1914

During my command of the naval cadets, I applied for a position at the naval academy. I later held onto my application, which I had to compose myself. I have it in front of me. It gave expression to thoughts I'd been preoccupied with over the previous two years: If there was a war, how could a solitary training cruiser in foreign waters be used? Any unbiased person who reads this short composition will have to admit that it in no way aims to incite war crimes but rather that it illustrates the high ethical standards of our officer corps. The concluding sentence is key: "If enemy prizes cannot be brought into harbour, the personnel are to be taken aboard the escort vessels for humanitarian reasons before sinking the prize."

In opposition to this, one can also find a reference to the words uttered by the British admiral Lord Fisher at the peace conference that took place at the Hague: "Might makes right." This phrase did not come from me, a German naval officer, but from the British naval officer.

It took some time for the decision about my application for admission to be made and communicated. Finally, in the summer, I received a negative reply. Immediately thereafter the fall positions were announced and I was made torpedo boat commander, satisfying my most burning desires. Figuring that I did not need to spend the nights aboard the torpedo boat during our time in harbour, I rented a nice apartment in Kiel, which had many comforts. I had furniture made for the bedroom, living room and dining room, and I hung the many old oil paintings which I had inherited from Grandmother on the walls. In this way, I gave the apartment my own personal touch, particularly since I had many souvenirs from my long voyages abroad. They included beautiful folding screens and vases and several interesting pictures. Also: works of wrought brass from the Mediterranean. I had a fireplace installed in one corner of the apartment, which made everything even cozier, and in the bedroom, I had a sink installed with running cold and hot water, which was heated by the electric heater in the bathroom. In this way, I was

extraordinarily comfortable; one could almost call the apartment grandiose. I was a rich man at the time and could afford it.

By contrast, our life on the boats was hard and merciless, and we always had to earn at sea the comforts that awaited us in harbour. There were five of us torpedo boat commanders, commanding the boats of the half flotilla, and what a jolly and harmonious corps we were!

There was B. He had spent a year out of the navy, at university, in the belief that he would be happier there. But he, too, soon acknowledged that the blue sea never lets anyone go once she has cast her spell on him. With his clear, blue eyes and his dreaminess, he was truly a young German man who idealized everything. We practiced very gutsy steering exercises. Especially popular were the exercises where you broke through your own line of battleships to attack the enemy formation. There was only a distance of 150 meters between your bow and the stern of the ship in front of you. Due to this and the fact that the ships were sailing at top speed, being able to steer your way through meant that you had to have mastered the art of steering and have good nerves to boot. Everything boiled down to one trick that you needed to have mastered. Sometimes the admiral would dangle a bottle of sparkling wine from a cutter mast jutting out at the stern of the flagship, to increase the motivation. Whoever snatched it could keep it. One time, B., the dreamer, couldn't manage the task. At full speed, he steered the boat into the belly of a ship of the line. I can still hear how his boat compressed all the way to the first bridge. It sounded as if someone had crushed a cigar box with his fist. Because the foreship always had to be cleared during these exercises, there were happily no victims in the incident. But after this failure, conscientious B. arrived at the conclusion that he didn't have the mettle to be a naval officer. And so, he took his leave from the sea once more. Yet the sea would not let him go. In the world war that soon followed, he became a first officer on an auxiliary cruiser. After a heroic battle on the English west coast, the cruiser was sunk. He fell and now sleeps his eternal sleep in the depths of the Atlantic.

Then there was L.[120] He was highly educated and well-read, a very intelligent, clear-headed man. And as a navigator, he was calm and reliable. He described people and situations in his sarcastic way, making us burst with enjoyment. Close to the war he went to his estate near Lübeck. I can't say what's happened to him now, after the Second World War. The Russians would have expropriated his estate. Oh, how happy I would be to see him again!

[120] T.N. Incomplete last name in the margin.

Then there was my *Rottenknecht,* the subordinate commander of the two-ship formation, Tr.[121] He was small in stature, with a provocative turned-up nose which he stuck everywhere. Equipped with a happy disposition and a certain harmlessness, he did not let the world weigh on his shoulders. At the time, Count Zeppelin was building his first airships. Everybody wanted to get involved with this new weapon. Tr., too, applied and went to *L 2*.[122] as commander. After several successful trips, the ship caught fire over Berlin for unknown reasons. The crew, and with them our dear Tr., died the awful death of being burned alive.

The fifth one of us, Fr., who was commander of our lead ship, went to the airship division of the Air Force as well. He commanded *L 3*. He did not fall but went to Stettin after the war. I haven't heard from him since the second war. Since he was a specialist, the Russians may have been interested in him.

His watch officer, Hellmuth Freiherr von M.[123] had to give his life, however. It was a wonderful summer's day. I was lying west of Heligoland with my boat, on my own. Our airships were following the maneuver instructions and reconnoitering to the west. I scanned the horizon with my telescope from time to time and now I saw something unusual. It seemed to be a sailboat but with peculiar rigging. Everyone pointed his telescope in that direction. Suddenly, someone screamed, "It's the wreck of an airship!" We took off toward it at full speed. Her bow and stern were jutting up at an angle. The whole middle was under water. It was **L1**[124]. We put in our small boats but could recover only corpses. The entire crew had drowned.

For weeks, the dead washed ashore on the islands, including Hellmuth Freiherr von M. We laid him to rest with military honours in the quiet and dignified cemetery in Schleswig. He was an especially dear and divinely gifted comrade. I can still see him sitting at the grand piano playing, which he did masterfully.

Taking stock of Germany's best young men who were lost like this—all those who were in their best years when we were assigned our boats—is truly heart-wrenching. The incident I've just recounted was not the exception but the rule. Through the two wars,

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[121] T.N. The handwritten note in the margin appears to say "U. (?) Trenck."
[122] T.N. L stands for "Luftschiff", i.e. rigid airship of the type made by Zeppelin.
[123] T.N. The handwritten note in the margin says "Mallzahn", and this is repeated at the top of the margin on the following page.
[124] C.D. **L1** was an experimental German military rigid airship assigned to the Imperial German Navy. On 9 September 1913 during naval maneuvers it crashed into the North Sea in a violent thunderstorm. This was the first Zeppelin accident with fatalities. Today this accident is known as the Heligoland Island Air Disaster.

the German people have been shaken to their deepest core and sapped of strength. This unwise and cruel bloodletting, for which not the German people alone are responsible, will take a terrible toll on the entire world. How clever was Emperor Augustus in Rome when he was asked why he was not destroying his enemies. He replied in disbelief, "Am I not destroying my enemies when I turn them into friends?" If the Europeans had only acted like this, the piles of rubble before which we now stand would not be as high.

I stayed almost eight years in the unit of the above-named flotilla and moved up from Commander to Commander-in-Chief of the Half-Flotilla to Chief of the Flotilla. The war made my bond with the crew stronger and stronger. In fact, I knew the personal circumstances of a large number of my subordinates, the way it should be.[125]

The year 1912 brought the most important moment in my life, as it is in the life of every man, the engagement to my future wife, Elsbeth, née Lieder. With two comrades I had chartered a former customs cutter, the "*Erika*." She was a stately vessel, whose maintenance required me to employ a sailor, who lived on board. Usually we would take guests along, going just outside the harbour and returning in the evening. But we also undertook longer journeys and there too, there were always guests onboard as the ship was able to accommodate six people easily. On one such journey, I had asked Mrs. Mabel Kraushaar to come along, who in turn asked if she could bring along Miss Lieder and Mr. Joachim von Bose.

We were a jolly company. The trip through the straits was not without danger for the "*Erika*." You had to be quick on your feet to avoid running aground in the narrow and serpentine fairway. One night I was following my winding path like that and quickly ran from the rudder to below deck to memorize where beacons and lights might be, and then ran quickly back to the rudder. It was gusty and conditions were unfavourable. Miss Elsbeth helped and was the most loyal and unshakable hand there was. Like an old skipper she sailed that barge, read me course angles from the maps, helped with tacking, worked the sheet ropes; in short, she took her assistance as a matter of course and helped out like an old salt.

The reasons for this would become clear to me. She and her siblings had their own sailboat, which they were always taking here and there. My hair stood on end one day watching her sail single-handed

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[125] T.N. The following text, to the end of Chapter 20, is copied in from a translation done in 2016 based on Wolfgang Krastel's excerpt from Theophil's memoir. Krastel wrote, "I, Wolfgang Krastel, saved the following excerpts from the life of Theo Gautier on my computer in December 2001. Certain passages I altered slightly or supplemented, and I corrected any obviously incorrect dates."

across the harbour in truly stormy weather in order to pick up someone at a bridge. We were already engaged at the time and I was scared to death for my bride when I noticed that she was absent at her parents' house upon my arrival there. I stood on land like a mother duck, looking out after her hatched ducklings.

I had never known a young girl like her. I was, as they say, head over heels. Elsbeth's calm and assured manner, always ready to help, left an increasingly profound impression on me, and by the end of the journey it was clear to me that I was deeply in love. As seems to always be the case in such situations, I lost all sense of time. Hours do not strike for a happy man.

The week-long sailing vacation was over, but Kiel was still far away. Thus I put into harbour at Sonderburg and there, in a state of great urgency, sent a long telegram to my duty station in which I retroactively requested an extension and begged their pardon. Ah, dear south wind, blow some more! My lass longs for me.[126] The talking-to I got from Sea Captain Hartog in Kiel ran off me like water off a duck's back. It was all the same to me. I was filled with nothing but great bliss because I felt that Elsbeth was fond of me too.

Soon after, I dressed to the nines, tied the silver sash around my slender body and asked Elsbeth's parents for her hand. I felt quite apprehensive sitting across from respectable old Mr. Lieder, who had a life full of work and success to look back on and a deep strain of scepticism in him. In the end, however, he assented and we shook hands, and I took into my heart this good and decent father-in-law, in spite of occasional differences. In the evening a small meal was enjoyed by the closest circle of family. My father-in-law gave a witty speech and announced the engagement.

Elsbeth's sister Lotti, who was sitting opposite me, went white as chalk and looked at me shyly. At the time she was still almost a child and seemed to be in shock over her new close relative. She got over it in time.

Our sons carry his blood in their veins and have, as I hope, also inherited his spirit and *diablerie*. In any case I want them to know what he was like and what they owe to him and his memory.

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[126] T.N. Quoting from Richard Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*.

Above: Philipp and Marie Lieder as a young married couple. They were the parents of Theophil's wife, Elsbeth Lieder. Elsbeth could not remember her mother, Marie, because Marie died in 1896 when Elsbeth was just two years old. Philipp, soon after Marie's untimely death, remarried. He built for his second wife, Johanna Mund, pictured on opposite page, and their blended family of six children a mansion on an estate in Kitzeberg, Germany, near Kiel, to which they moved from China after Philipp retired.

Johanna Mund, Philipp Lieder's second wife, with Philipp's young daughter, Elsbeth, leaning on her shoulder. Johanna was the only mother Elsbeth knew. In the early years of Philipp's marriage to Johanna, during their years in China, they lived in Philipp's large mansion in the Bund neighborhood in Shanghai with their blended family of six children including Elsbeth.

Philipp Lieder's magnificent mansion in Shanghai, in which Elsbeth spent her childhood. Philipp is seated on the horse cart, holding the reins, with his wife, Marie, at his side and a Chinese servant facing to the rear. Marie's brother, Bertram Rosenbaum, is standing on the porch of the second floor looking down on them.

Philipp Adolf Lieder was born in Argentina on December 18, 1857. As a boy he was sent to Hamburg, where he stayed with his step-aunt Henriette Meiners. The previously well-to-do family was now impoverished, or at least no longer wealthy.[127] The aunt ran a school in St. Georg.[128] Philipp, who by now had started an apprenticeship at the China company Georg Telge jun., not only had to work for the household but also had to substitute at the school if teachers were absent. Things became difficult when the aunt remarried. She gave up the school and unfortunately the boarding wages from Argentina stopped arriving shortly thereafter. Soon things had progressed to the point where there was no longer sufficient dry bread to still their hunger. The two widowed spouses together had five children to feed, and consumption soon befell these children. Phillip too received a blow to his health that would affect him for the rest of his life. He was and continued to be physically delicate. But this did not prevent him from climbing steeply upward with incredible energy and, in spite of his frail body, to deal with exertions where some stronger people would have failed. Here, as always, spirit and will came out

[127] C.D. This is a direct quote from an account of Philipp Lieder's life by his son, Kurt Lieder. Gautier seems to have taken much of his information about his father-in-law from his own brother-in-law's manuscript.
[128] T.N. A quarter in central Hamburg.

on top. Philipp's father in his late years was completely impoverished and he was just able to return to Hamburg before Philipp went to China. An inheritance of 10,000 marks allowed the father to live out his sunset years without worry.

When a position became available in China at the Telge company, Philipp applied for it and was successful. In 1878, he departed on the British steamship the "*Gordon Castle*" which only travelled at 10 knots. Philipp made use of the long voyage to learn English. By the time they arrived in Shanghai, he had mastered the language to the extent that it served him with complete satisfaction in daily use. The company gave him his quarters at the "Hong," where several other young employees were also being accommodated. The "glamour of the east" was seductive to him too, and soon he was in debt, but he had too much inner stability to become hopelessly caught in this enthralling tide.

He signed up to travel into the interior of China, to the edge of the Gobi Desert, to lead and supervise the transport of machines and installations for the building of a new textile factory. The viceroy Zuo Zongtang [General Tso] had the ambition of building such a factory in the heart of China, far removed from all European civilization.

It was to be a transport of a total of 5000 boxes,[129] moved into the interior from the coast partly on carts, partly on mules and partly carried by coolies. In addition came of course personnel and technicians of every kind for both the construction and the running of the factory. And everything was overseen and attended to by young Philipp as the jack of all trades.[130] No less than six months later, the caravan finally arrived at the destination of Lanzhou, and the work began.

Astoundingly, the boxes all arrived in one piece. None wase missing. But the human loss and the loss of transport animals who had died en route was significant. This weighed heavily on Philipp, but to his astonishment, it made no impression on the viceroy. The only thing that interested him was that all the boxes had arrived, and through this success, Philipp was in his good books.

On the way they had passed through completely deserted villages which had been laid to waste during uprisings of Mohammedan Chinese, who had, for simplicity's sake, killed everyone and everything.

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[129] C.D. Kurt's manuscript mentions a total of 1,500 boxes, but we have no way of knowing which was the more accurate number.

[130] C.D. This again seems to be a direct quote from Kurt Lieder's manuscript.

The transport route led over high mountains, where it was so cold that even beer and cognac froze in their bottles.[131] All things considered, it was such a romantic and dangerous task that every young man would have likely been drawn to it. But it would have also been very easy for Philipp to come to rack and ruin with this task. He was the typical example of a colonial conqueror faced with immense difficulties but also great opportunity. Cortez and Pizarro would have been cut from the same cloth. In order to better adapt to the surroundings, Philipp wore only Chinese clothing whilst travelling. Soon this was all he ever wore, and he grew a ponytail and soon mastered the Chinese language, or at least the local dialect. Already upon his arrival he carried out the negotiations with the viceroy personally, without an interpreter. After a year another young man was sent out from the coast by Telge, Hermann Mandl, who would become Philipp's best friend and later partner. Both became Chinese mandarins, wore on their Chinese hats a button and a peacock feather and they both enjoyed special favour with the viceroy. The factory was also completed and opened for operation. Soon there were difficulties with the European personnel, however, who either ran away or went to the dogs. After three years the factory was taken over by the Chinese.

Mandl, Lieder and all European workers set off for the coast, where Philipp arrived as a made man after an absence of around five years. His health, however, had suffered once again. The viceroy would often beckon him at ungodly hours, at which point ice-cold sparkling wine and impossible dishes were served, and Philipp, just seeing or smelling the dish, would feel like gagging. But he had to smile and choke it down. Henceforth Philipp had problems with his stomach and in his later years he had to be painstakingly careful.

The factory, incidentally, was only in operation for a short time. The machines and installations did not agree with the Chinese. The factory soon came to ruin. Sven Hedin mentions the ruins of the factory in his works.

The viceroy had given his two friends, Lieder and Mandl, each 10,000 taels[132] as a departure gift. In addition to this came their income, which had accumulated over the course of five years. The two friends not only felt like capitalists, they actually were.

They had become so Chinese themselves that they seriously considered whether they should go to Tianjin, a Chinese city, and start their own business. But in the end they went to Shanghai, where Philipp became a partner of Telge. That was in 1884. At the same

[131] C.D. Again, this seems to be a line from Kurt Lieder's manuscript.

[132] C.D. Taels were both a unit of weight and a currency, as Chinese currencies of fine metals were not denominated, and their value was determined by their weight.

time, Mandl joined the *Jardine-Mathiessen* company, which was well known in the East. Philipp, however, did not get on well with his partner Telge, who did not appreciate Philipp's generous manner, his open hand. He [Telge] hadn't understood the motto that was so taken to heart in the east: "You've got to grease the wheels."

It is indeed often necessary in life to give up certain possessions in order to receive in exchange the opportunity to earn larger ones. The trick is to make the right choices, and if one does not master this art, one can certainly lose one's fortune. Philipp mastered this art particularly well. Through it, he earned a considerable fortune which at times amounted to more than five million gold marks.

Mandl and Lieder in the meantime had made a substantial name for themselves on the Chinese coast. The largest companies had become aware of these two capable minds and successful business men. Krupp, as well as Schneider-Creusot and Maxim-Vickers offered them the opportunity to be their representatives. For this reason, both travelled to Europe and came to an agreement with Krupp. When they returned to Shanghai, they founded their own company, H. Mandl & Co.

Lieder brought his young wife, whom he had married during his time back home, along with him. She was Marie Rosenbaum, from an old (not Jewish) Saxon family of civil servants, who had produced many high-ranking forest officers for their state. The young woman was marvellously adept at fitting in with the spirit and mindset of the Chinese coast. She had a particularly good relationship with the Chinese and therefore lent valuable support to her husband's business. She was a magnificent and sophisticated painter. We still possess a number of appealing, gold-framed paintings by her hand, including *Chinesenjunge auf einem Büffel (Chinese Boy on a Buffalo)*, *Chinesin (Chinese Woman),* in a straw-braided rain costume, *Wasserträgerin (Water Carrier)*, a Chinese woman with an oil paper umbrella and finally the small *Seestück (Sea Piece)*, which depicts Perim Island at the mouth of the Red Sea. Unfortunately, a whole portfolio with other watercolours by her hand fell prey to the circumstances during the capture of Vienna (1945).

Mandl and Lieder had extraordinary success in business. Soon they needed to establish a branch in Tianjin, in the north, that is. The director of this branch was Mr. G. Baur, who was employed by the Krupp company at the Chinese railway school in Tianjin. Baur later became a member of the supervisory board for Friedrich Krupp A.G. He was also the director of the Germania shipyard in Kiel. In the early days of our marriage we spent many warm hours at his house. My wife especially is close friends with his children. The son Friedl Baur became the director of the well-known Kruppwerk in Berndorf in Lower Austria following the integration of Austria. At the time I was often dealing with him professionally in my capacity

as an arms inspector. We were also often in the Haus am Brand, the Krupp Villa above the factory, visiting the son, Claus, Mr. Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, who immediately fell as a pilot officer at the beginning of the war. We had friendly relations with both him and his brother in-law, the very honoured Freiherr von Wilmowsky.

Mandl and Lieder stayed in close contact with the Chinese viceroy Li-Hung-Chang and thus continuously received important contracts. The company had its glory days during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–95. Lieder brought in extraordinarily valuable contracts for arms in Nanjing. I still remember one episode, which my father-in-law recounted to me, laughing. This was about a contract for a very large number of sea mines. But the viceroy did not want to do a blind bargain; he wanted to see the effect of the mines with his own eyes. And so a platform with a throne was built for him on the bank. Upstream a junk was put out to drift, with a mine installed under its big belly.

With a time fuse, it was detonated as it drifted by the viceroy. The junk's ascension into the sky was grandiose, the splinters flew into the faces of the thousands of spectators, and the enthusiasm and the contract were enormous. Less pleasant was an order of artillery guns. Mandl and Lieder, who had never been soldiers, assembled a Krupp gun on the basis of descriptions and then had to shoot it themselves. For both men it was a dangerous game to load the shells, close the breechblock and finally pull the trigger. They were frightened to death and were happy when they heard the redemptive bang and saw the target being struck and falling over in shreds.

Finally a whole series of steamships came from Germany carrying the war materials that had been ordered. But the Japanese, far superior militarily, blocked the Chinese harbours where the unloading was to take place. Lieder got precise information about the mine barriers that had been placed in the entrance to the harbour by the Japanese, secretly boarded the ships that were waiting in agreed-upon places in the dead of the night and piloted them into the harbour himself, a risk that all the ever-so-famous Yangtze pilots had been simply unwilling to take. In this way all the ships reached their destinations; only one was lost. The business and the earnings were enormous.

Lieder's effort in attaining such success had been great. For months he had lived in an unheated Chinese hotel in the cold winter. He had tremendous exertions behind him. Bringing in ships with everything this entailed, for example sailing on the open ocean in small, miserable boats, climbing onboard, piloting with apprehension through the blockade and mine barriers, in short all of this had taken a toll on his frail body. He was bedridden in Shanghai for months with a tenacious case of bronchitis. The doctor who was treating him, Dr. Paulum, feared an imminent catastrophe.

Lieder had to return home quickly. His wife and children, Kurt and Elsbeth, accompanied him. In Suez, the whole family got off the ship and spent the winter in Egypt. He himself recovered quickly, but his beloved wife became ill with a liver abscess. She underwent surgery and died in Cairo on February 2, 1896. Our son Werner visited her grave in 1934 when he went to Cairo on a training ship, and found it to be in good condition. He laid down a large bouquet of roses, commemorating with love his unknown grandmother.

Lieder suffered intensely from this loss. He went to Hamburg and purchased a beautiful property, 11 Blumenstrasse. His splendid horses and equipages were known throughout the city, taken care of by an English coachman named Thomas. As usual, he also kept several boats; in short, he had everything a heart could desire. But he was alone.

For this reason he married for a second time, in 1897. This was in Antwerp and the woman was Miss Johanna Mund. The family lived comfortably in Hamburg until 1902. Then they moved to the newly built house in Kitzeberg at the Kieler Förde.

When my wife and I were married, our wedding took place in Kitzeberg on March 26, 1913. We were married by my dear friend, the pastor of the Huguenot community in Berlin, Peter Lorenz, with whom I had been in a naval commando several years previously. The hall in the Kavalierhaus (*Blockhaus)* was decorated nicely and the marriage ceremony in the presence of many guests was very impressive. As the motto for the marriage sermon, we had asked Lorenz to expound on the words "Faith, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love". My young wife and I were both deeply moved. We both took it very seriously and I believe we also kept our promises.

For our honeymoon, we went to Lake Como, to the Villa Serbelloni. But I was drawn to Venice. I had to show my dear wife what I had seen and experienced there three years earlier. In this way I stepped into the role of a tour guide and the two of us young newlyweds had a wonderful time.When we returned to Kiel we found our apartment there completely set up and furnished. Touchingly, my mother- and father-in-law had put everything in order. It was a very modern and pretty apartment taking up an entire floor at 38 Feldstrasse. On the ground floor there was a luxurious florist's shop. Anyone who came to visit thus felt obliged to quickly pick up some flowers for us, and so we constantly had fresh flowers in our apartment. I can therefore recommend strongly to any young couple who are establishing themselves that they do so above a florist's shop.

At the home of my in-laws, whom we immediately visited to thank them and to tell them about our trip, we met an older woman dressed in snow-white with snow-white hair. Thus attired, she was a striking figure. She sat across from us at the table, and suddenly she began speaking in an unusually loud voice, staring fixedly at the two

of us. It became very still in the room and all attention was paid to her, with everyone listening to this strange woman, who like a Cassandra spoke in an almost singsong voice. She said she could smell a great deal of blood. Great murder was going to come over the whole world. She was not yet able to say whether I would come out of it alive.

At first everyone at the table smiled. But soon we were overcome by an uneasiness and this damned prophesy stayed with us in the subsequent weeks, disturbing the comfort of our so very harmonious and happy new marriage. The incident is for me proof that second sight exists. Unfortunately the prophetess was ever so right.

A year later came the First World War. Fourteen days before its outbreak our first child, our son Werner, arrived. I have already described how I experienced his birth in a sea of bliss in Skagen.

The command "Get ready for war" drove our fleet to Kiel, to replenish stocks and take live ammunition on board. And so I sat at my Elsbeth's bed. My child, for whom I had longed for such a long time, was in her arms, at her breast. The crews were only allowed to go unit by unit to say goodbye to their families. Outside there was drumming and, through a detachment marching, with their officer-in-command reading aloud a cabinet decree in a raised voice, martial law was declared. Astonished, Elsbeth asked me what that meant. I had to tell her that an hour later I would have to be back on board, that I would be going to war. My heart and surely Elsbeth's as well nearly broke under the burden. For me it wasn't fear, just tremendous pain in the face of our newly begun, limitless happiness. After all, one could hardly expect to return home as the pilot of a torpedo boat. All our exercises had focussed on immediately attacking with the flotillas and on relentlessly bringing them into action. We had not predicted that the British would evade such a fast and chivalrous move. Instead the British chose the long-distance blockade; they chose the slow, choking economic war which violated all international agreements. This war tactic came tremendous economic tensions, intensified in the Second World War, whose effect was like a boomerang, making England , too, a fatally ill state.

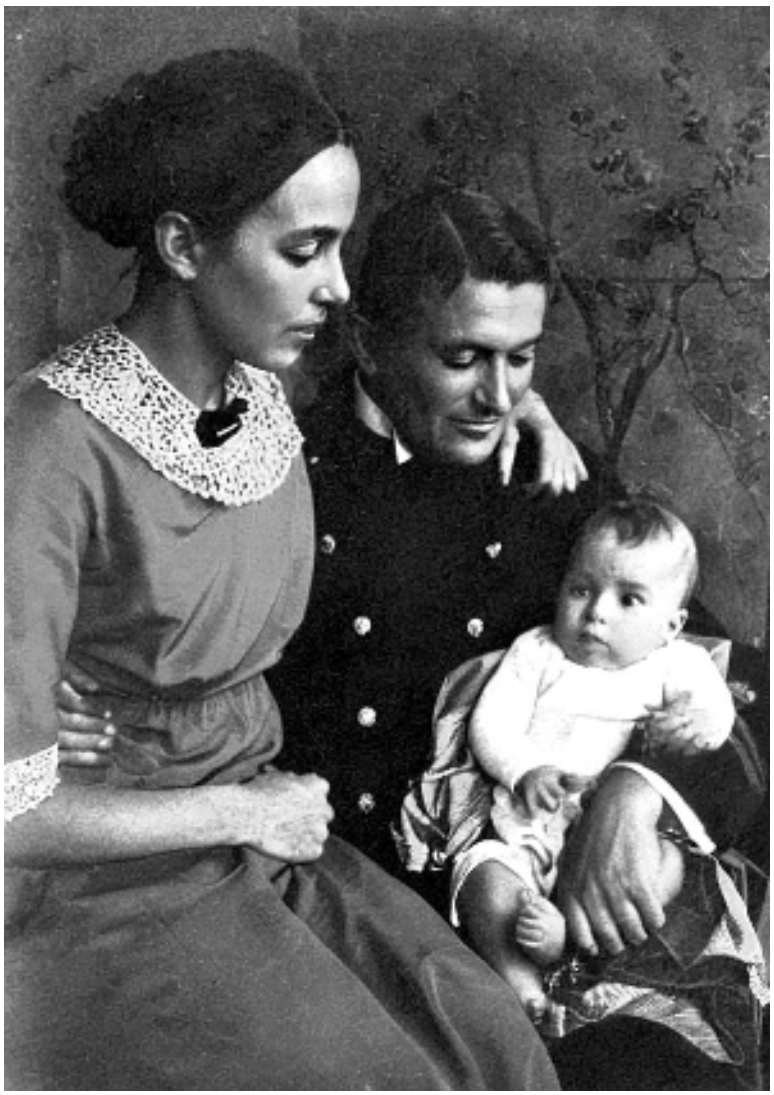
When my reprieve had come to an end, I kissed my wife and our child and could not tear myself away. And then I went with my suitcase with clothing and provisions in one hand and my guitar in the other hand, leaving with my orderly. In this way we came on board as a swarm of comrades, all of whom were in a similar state. A short sermon brought together the troops again in our beloved Wik church and then we set off. My flotilla went to the Baltic Sea at first, and all others went to the North Sea.

Our comrade Schömann, from a Wilhelmshaven flotilla, was in Kiel on vacation at the time. Dressed in civilian clothes and carrying an umbrella he boarded just before we put out to sea, and was then

transferred to his boat on the North Sea. He had feared he wouldn't make it. I never saw him again.

And then began the terribly slowly choking war that was so alien to us. The army went from victory to victory, while the fleet, on whose quick success the entire fatherland was counting, had to remain deedless. The enemy did not face us. In the officer corps a feeling of mutiny hung in the air, and the same mood prevailed among the crew. The desire was to advance with the entire fleet to the English coast and to force the decisive battle: military madness, of course, but an example of the spirit of *diablerie*.

The mansion Philipp Lieder built for his family after moving back to Germany from China, overlooking the waterfront at Kitzeberg on the Kiele Förde.



Elsbeth and Theophil in 1914, the year of the beginning of World War One, with their first child, Werner, who grew up to be Christa Gautier Dunn's father.

Theophil wrote of this house: "We finally found a lovely permanent home in Heikendorf, at the Stauenkamp. It was a villa meant for one family, with seven rooms. It therefore had plenty of space for our family of six.... The property was about a twenty-minute walk from the Kitzeberg steamship bridge and was out in the open, with a view of the meadows, hedgerows and beech woods, all the way down to the blue Kiele Förde." Unfortunately, the Kiele Förde waterfront was the location of U-boat pens during World War Two. The entire area including this house was destroyed by enemy bombs during the war.

Elsbeth and her first son, Werner, about the time of the Battle of the Skagerrak in 1916.

A portrait of Elsbeth and Werner about 1917.

Werner with his baby brother, Kurt-Theophil, the second of what became Theophil and Elsbeth's four boys. This photo was taken in 1919 at the end of World War One.

Ida Stephany and her son, Werner, strolling in Wiesbaden. Ida and her husband, Albert Stephany, took in Theophil when he was orphaned. At this time, she was a wealthy woman with a castle on the Rhine. At some point during World War One she was short of funds and had to sell the castle. Inflation after the war was so severe that the cash quickly became worthless, and Ida died in poverty.

Theophil on leave as a young officer in the Imperial German Navy near the end of World War One, holding the hand of his first-born son, Werner, age 4, in 1918.

Theophil on his torpedo boat at the time of the Battle of the Skagerrak in 1916.

Korvettenkapitän Gautier,
beschoss Dover und Calais.
Des deutschen Seemanns Wagemut
Ist höchst bewundernswert,
Er opfert alles, selbst sein Blut,
Kämpft er für Heimatsherd.
Ein Gautier auch hat jüngst vollbracht
Ein wahres Meisterstück,
Dafür uns stehen auf der Wacht
Solch Männer, ist ein Glück.
Landau Rheinpfalz, Frühjahr 1917.

This is either a postcard or an award. The translation is: "Corvette Captain Gautier, shelled Dover and Calais. As a German sailor, he has highly admirable courage. He sacrifices everything, even his blood; he fights for his homeland. What Gautier has recently accomplished is a true masterpiece. We stand guard for it; such men are a blessing. Landau Rheinpfalz, New Year 1917."

Chapter 21

Skagerrak
(The Battle of Jutland)

The emperor came personally to Wilhelmshaven and gave one of his enthralling speeches to the officer corps of the ships that were stocking up on provisions in the harbour. He demanded obedience and emphasized that he was bearing the responsibility and must not put the fleet recklessly into impossible situations during the enemy's dallying tactics. Subsequently, regular and very carefully-planned forays toward the English coast were carried out, with the intention of forcing their hand. But the desired goal remained elusive. The enemy avoided contact. Only once, at the Skagerrak, were we able to really get them in our grips and shake them. I will write about this now as the only memory of the war that I'm writing down. We owe it to the fallen, who died for an ideal. Apart from that, we have all had enough of war and it is a good thing to look ahead to the future instead of back into the past. When I, from the lowlands of the present day, from the outlawry of our life and from the ostracism with which the world burdens our good people unjustly, attempt now to warm myself in the rays of this spirited past, I am doing so as a swimmer who is drowning and praying to God in his desperation, "From the depths, dear God, I beg of You, do not let us perish, we who were capable of such a willingness to sacrifice."

It was May 31, 1916.[133] We had been up and about since the early hours. The propellers were spinning tirelessly beneath my cabin. I had lain down to rest for a few minutes in preparation for the coming night, when I would have to be up top. Our whole fleet was heading north. I was way in back with my torpedo boat half flotilla, escorting an old cruiser. It was an aggravating situation. If things really started to happen, we wouldn't be able to act in a timely manner. And so, I was tossing and turning, trying to sleep. The propellers were beating; water was splashing against the ship's wall. The petroleum lamp above the desk was rattling and swinging in its Cardanic suspension. It was a wretched state. I couldn't sleep so I got up and went up to the bridge, irritated. Then, suddenly, one of the many foreign trawlers appeared in front of us, just at the right time. Now

[133] C.D. This was the beginning of the Battle of the Skagerrak, the largest naval battle of the First World War. It involved a total of 100,000 men aboard 250 ships, including some of the largest battle cruisers in the world, over the course of 72 hours.

we had something to do. The usual words passed back and forth through the megaphones. The crews stood at the rail and looked each other up and down. The trawler's papers were in perfect order. He was from Ijmuiden. We let him pass and moved on northward. The Dutch waved their hats in greeting. Now the relief in being occupied with something was gone. The tedium was just too much. Suddenly, the bell in the radio shack sounded sharply, twice. This had to be important. Now the message came through the speaking tube: "A small enemy cruiser is in sight to the left of the vanguard." Now it was time to move up to the front, otherwise we would arrive too late. With a semaphore message, we signalled our departure to the cruiser, and then the engines gave everything they had. Now things were going to get serious. You could see it instantly from the movements of the squadrons, which moved smoothly out of their march formation into battle formation.

As we drew nearer, a fire suddenly flared up at the front of the line. The first salvo from our side had gone off. Other ships joined in. The firing had begun. Far away on the horizon I could spot the enemy through my binoculars. Masts with small black dots beneath them. That was all there was of our target. Gradually we approached our position and fell in with other boats. On the port side, far forward of our line, something was burning. It drifted astern and was hit a few more times, causing the clouds from explosives to rise up. It was a British destroyer. Later, she sank, and her crew was rescued by one of our boats. Things were growing serious this time. The feeling of endless satisfaction was visible on every face. This was only all too understandable. For almost two years we had had to toil without ever getting our hands on the enemy. Now we were finally getting the real, long-awaited battle. The watchman yelled, "A drifting object ahead!" It was a drifting dinghy. Next to it, something was floating. Suddenly an arm that was begging for help reached out of the water. It was too late. The thunderous stern wave of the boats was already crashing down over it. We had to advance. Heavy fighting was going on ahead of us. Then we gradually entered the range of fire. Here and there came the first strikes that were close to us. With a bang, a large-calibre shell exploded in front of us, churning up a mountain of water. Fish came drifting by us in increasing numbers, showing us their white bellies. And then a downright hellish concert broke loose on us, lasting about an hour. We had to endure it silently, in position. There was no lying down and no trench for cover. The command to the helmsman was "Steer the course," and we had to wait and see what would come. The fire was increasing noticeably. Salvo after salvo came down, long, short, closer. The ship next astern of us had the pennant on her mast shot off. It was hoisted again and shot off again. The mast remained intact, but was so wobbly that it later had to be reinforced at the shipyard.

Now our ships received the first hits, but the impact wasn't great as far as we could see. Like during the maneuver, they kept going as planned, holding their positions painstakingly. The distances between us remained identical. There was only one direction, one goal, one will—the will to victory. Salvo upon salvo rolled from our ships, round and full, as if each was a single shot, giving proof of our thorough training and iron discipline. And in this way our artillery gradually gained fire superiority over the enemy in an ever more noticeable way. It was precise shooting. The enemy fire, on the other hand, became more disorderly. The strikes were far apart. You could observe increasingly frequent and severe strikes on the British ships, and then, suddenly, came the moment of the first loss over there. A yellow blaze like a darting flame flared up into the sky from fire-red clouds and a terrible heat wave started spreading, blurring the image in the binoculars and making it dance. As the smoke lifted, there was nothing left to see. There was one British battle cruiser less. We shuddered. Everything was burnt. Things must have ended quickly for them over there. Things were going well for us; we were moving forward. Everyone knew it. The mood was elevated, brilliant. Folded slices of buttered bread were handed out. Everyone ate, chewing with their cheeks full. While the sharp cracks of the strikes had been bothersome at first, now we had grown accustomed to them. It was not as dangerous as it sounded.

A few days earlier, we had received a new recruit on board, a very young unskilled scribe. During battle, he was to carry the injured on stretchers, but since no one had been injured so far, he could watch the grand spectacle at his leisure, sitting on the potato box, which gave him a good view. Suddenly a heavy shell exploded very close to us. The air pressure was so great that everything took a knock. A piece of explosive whizzed through the air. We saw it coming—whirring, whistling—and then it slammed into the cutter, throwing up bits of wood and then it got lodged in the deck. This was too much for the little scribe! He fell down from his potato box. Concerned hands lifted him up, but he was alive and unharmed. Well, the laugh is always on the loser. It's difficult to imagine, but we were in even greater spirits after this incident.

But eventually we'd had enough of this deedless waiting. We were itching to spring into action. The torpedo machinist glanced furtively at his fledglings, looked towards the bridge and the enemy. We weren't that far off, soon we would be close enough. And finally, we heard the longed-for signal from the flagship: "Torpedo boats advance to the enemy!" We roared off. Already, our own line was behind us. Suddenly, everything went quiet all around us. We had left the enemy's fire without this being noticed by the enemy yet. "Ninety hundred, eighty hundred." But that's when it started. Hell was unleashed at us. A bullet came flying. Was it meant for you or for

me? A boat broke down, having apparently received a severe blow. Already the sternpost was jutting up above the water; the boat was sinking. We were unable to reach out to him, our good comrade. We moved forward, the engines giving everything they had. The enemy came closer and closer. "How far?" "Sixty hundred!" "Are all boats still behind us?" Another one was lost, the next astern of us, alongside, but at least the crew could be rescued. "Fifty-five hundred." Now, we had to veer round after all! Our lead boat kept going. We had to be successful. The commander knew how much depended on this attack. It didn't matter who came home or not, if only the torpedoes would reach their targets. "Fifty hundred." It felt like an eternity. Smoke, steam, flashes, shell strikes, a heavy sea that was frothing, tumultuous. Now we slowly veered round. Shot after shot came from our boats. Powerful detonations on the enemy ships were proof of success. The flotillas had not been deployed in vain. The enemy was heavily shaken up. As we retreated, a blanket of smoke and growing darkness gave us cover. The strikes were to our right and left, but no further boats were being hit.

That was the daytime battle, to the extent that we saw it unfold close to us. Now night was coming. It was not black, but was dark enough to lead to another approach between friend and foe. It was after midnight. Ahead of us, the thunder of heavy gunning sounded incessantly. The sky was constantly lit up and flashed with red flames. Here and there, British torpedo boats attacked. We searched in vain for the main force of the enemy. It had retreated far to the north. The daytime battle had brought severe losses for the enemy. Around two in the morning, we noticed a yellow light on the horizon, port side ahead. We headed toward it. It was unusual how fresh our nerves still were and how calm everything remained. As we got closer, we saw that it was a burning vessel. We stopped at a distance of about three hundred meters abeam. Friend or foe? All eyes peered at it. Suddenly a salvo cracked. "Both engines full speed ahead!" So, it was an enemy boat! But how odd, no impact followed. Again, we turned to the vessel. And when, going windward, we came out of the smoke and fire, we recognized by the light of the fire the contours of a British lead destroyer. In the midst of our jubilation, the most horrible human misery showed itself. From all sides, we heard the sounds of weak cries for help from the water. The British crew, to the extent that the soldiers were still alive, were adrift all around us. We saved as many as we could. Thirteen[134] men in total. All the others were dead. We took several life buoys and timbers with us as trophies for our children and grandchildren to remember how the British mystique of Trafalgar was shot to shreds on this day by the

[134] T.N. "Thirteen" has been crossed out and in the margin "twenty" is written.

smaller German fleet. One of our torpedoes sunk the enemy ship once and for all.

The poor prisoners looked awful. Almost all of them were injured and had burns, and all of them were psychologically shaken. The day of loss, the terrible hours of their annihilation and the fear for their lives that came as a result had left their mark. They began all their sentences with, "It was a terrible disappointment." When we bandaged and strengthened them, they began to rail against their newspapers. They noticed, with surprise, that we did not fail to care for our brave, defeated enemy. This was something they had not dared to hope for. With the rising sun, we expected that battle would resume in daylight. But the enemy was nowhere to be seen. Their goal had been to move everything they still had to safety.

And then there's the story of the cup. A lifetime later, I wrote the following to my first grandson on this subject:

> *My dear first grandson! Your first name has not yet been decided, so I can't call you by it. But this does not change the fact that you are my eldest grandchild,*[135] *the first to bear my name in your generation and therefore you are especially dear to me. In this position there are duties that fall to you and which you will fulfill faithfully just as we before you have fulfilled them. For this reason, I can think of no one to whom I'd rather give this silver cup than you. It is especially precious to me, coming from a great time, and I know that you will hold onto it throughout your life come what may and, when the time comes, pass it on to those who come after you. I can give you the following explanation for the cup:*
>
> *The day and night fighting of the Battle of Jutland*[136] *was behind us. A pale morning was dawning. Two hours beforehand, my half flotilla, which I commanded, had wiped out the already burning British destroyer Turbulent with a torpedo strike. A total of approximately twenty men from the crew had been pulled out of the water by our boats and the rescued men were standing around on deck, their injuries attended to, and their hunger stilled. In this situation, a radio message came through instructing us to search for the damaged German cruiser* S.M.S. Rostock *and to rescue her crew. Through a happy accident, we quickly found the damaged ship. We went alongside and I called on the Admiral and Commander of the torpedo boats, who had embarked on the* Rostock. *While my boats were preparing to tow the ship, British searchlights reached us from*

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[135] C.D. This reference to "my eldest grandchild" is very irksome to me because *I* was his first grandchild, as he well knew! My parents and I were living in Frankfurt where Theophil and Elsbeth were also residing after the war's end. The first male grandchild to whom he refers here must be my younger brother Ulrich Theophil Etienne Gautier who was born 17 November 1949.

[136] T.N. This is the English name for this battle. Theophil refers to it as the *Schlacht am Skagerrak,* i.e. "Battle at the Skagerrak."

the horizon, sending us identification signals in Morse code. We answered with British response signals, which we had learned from our fleet commander in the middle of the night as per the battle plan. Because of this, the British—who were, as it turned out, a cruiser squadron—did not open fire immediately. However, the task of towing the Rostock *had to be relinquished and her crew was swiftly taken aboard. Now the upper decks of my boats were packed with people. Besides the several hundred men from the* Rostock*, there were also some of the crew of the* S.M.S. Lützow *whom we had taken aboard previously as their ship went down, as well as the rescued British. As we sailed away, we fired two torpedoes at the poor* Rostock*. The ship rolled over and then slid down into the depths. We torpedo boats then tried to move out of range of the heavy British cruisers with all our might. As the* Rostock *was sinking, they had opened fire with their heavy and medium guns. The impacts were often close to us and British and German men alike were ducking. Fortunately, however, there were no strikes. This meant that a few hours later, we were in Wilhelmshaven and able to unload our human freight and our intact trophies from the* Turbulent.

We were met with joyousness and jubilation. Music played, dear friends shook our hands. Spring had arrived in the land. Never before had the trees looked so green, never before had the flowers blossomed like they did that day. Bells were ringing and their sound echoed across the entire Fatherland. The prisoners were reporting in long rows. Quite a great number of them. Soldiers in field-grey uniforms led them off.[137] *Now everything had been done. I just had to send a telegram home, and then sleep. We were dead tired. That was victory.*

My dear grandson, may this cup that I am enclosing, which the crew of the Rostock *gave me several days later, remind you of all this.*

[137] T.N. Soldiers of the Imperial German Army.

Chapter 22
Mutiny and Revolution-1918

All of this is so long ago now. And yet some of it is so present in my mind that it feels as if it happened yesterday. For example, we had quite the Christmas party in our quarters in the "swarte Huis." Madame Meyne, our dear old landlady, had given us several bottles of red wine as a way of saying thank you for the messages we had passed on to her about her family, who had fled. All of a sudden, the door opened and one of our batmen came in. He was holding hands with Madame Meyne's housemaid and they announced that they were engaged to be married. This came as a great surprise as the conditions for such engagements were not favourable for different reasons. But the two young people held fast to each other and became a happy married couple.

Because I temporarily had to work in the staff of the commanding general, I also profited from the advantages of such a position. For example, I had myself assigned a very nice saddle horse which was cared for by a hussar who could no longer serve at the front and who was very happy in this comfortable position. And so, during every hour of leisure that I had while we were in port, you could find me on horseback, the hussar in my wake.

The area around Bruges was home to a number of charming manors. In the well-maintained parks there were also riding trails that led from one property to the next, meaning that you had new surroundings to discover for hours on end. And on the way home the great belfry and the steeple of the Church of our Lady would already beckon from afar.

However, it was becoming more and more burdensome to be separated from my family. My whole life I had longed for a home and a family, and now cruel fate was keeping me from them—for years now. It was true that letters were going back and forth on a daily basis and that I had pictures of my wife and child hanging on every wall. But this only made the longing worse. What joy when I could finally go home during the short days of our leave, and how terrible were the farewells that brought an end to these happy days every time. Every time there was the unspoken knowledge that this might be the last time. My child, my son, the only one who could carry on my name would be looking at me with his happy little face, lying in his little bed, and he would put his little arms around my neck and, trusting me entirely, would implore, "Dea old Fatha, come back 'gain'." These were words he repeated at every farewell. And then I would have a lump in my throat and I would run out so as not to cry and burden my poor young wife's heart even more. After all, the war

was getting tougher and tougher. The losses on both sides were becoming greater. Smear propaganda was hardening the souls of the fighters. Allegedly, a British ship called *Baralong* had treated German submarine crews with horrific cruelty. On the other side, we Huns were accused of chopping off children's hands.

Once, when I was looking out to sea, keeping a lookout while standing on the ledge of the jetty just before we put to sea, we heard a whistling in the air and immediately a British airplane whizzed by, gliding and coming at us from such a height that we only recognized it at the last moment. It buzzed by so close to our heads that in our rage we threw our hats at it, and immediately thereafter its bombs detonated just a few meters away from us. If you stood on the jetty longer, you occasionally saw corpses floating by, which we would then bury in the naval cemetery in Zeebruge. There they lie in long rows. This especially came to be the case after the British attack on the jetty, where there was hand-to-hand combat with knives and pistols. Just a few hours after the attack was repelled, the emperor himself was standing on the jetty, applauding all those who participated, even the captured and exhausted opponents, for their heroic bravery —words of recognition that were truly well deserved.

At that time, we received the first motorboats that were remote controlled. They moved without a crew and were controlled with Hertz waves by an airplane above them. Out in front of the coast, there was, just as there was every day, a large British monitor. This was a heavily armoured vessel with mainly two heavy guns. The motorboat, with a powerful explosive charge in the bow, put out to sea, went over to the monitor, and began circling in closer and closer around it. This first undertaking was observed with great interest through many binoculars all along the coast. It was grotesque and shockingly ridiculous how the monitor's great turret with its 30.5 cm guns was spinning like a humming top, trying to get its sights set on the pesky flea. To no avail. And then the motorboat, which was only a short distance away from the monitor, suddenly took off toward it and hit directly under her bridge. There was a powerful detonation. The side of the monitor had been ripped open, showing a huge hole. But she did not sink; instead she was towed, albeit painstakingly, to Dover by her comrades.

Great was my surprise one day when I received a telegram from my home country announcing the cessation of my appointment as Commanding Officer of the Flotilla and my new appointment as Commander of the First Flotilla Leader. Bidding farewell to my beloved flotilla and its crew, after eight years of sailing together, was difficult for me and for many of the others as well, as far as I could tell. And then off I went back home for new deeds and to see my family because I had a few weeks off while the vessel was being completed at the shipyard. And so, I had the first weeks at home with my

young wife and my son. My God, what joy this was! I had long given up believing that I would be going home. The war had become so merciless and had been going on for four years already. Now I had been given a few weeks' grace—a reprieve, it seemed to me. I cherished and consciously made use of every moment.

Then, when the test runs were completed, during which, as I mentioned, Prince Heinrich took part in the high-speed test drive,[138] I was about to put to sea for the first time to do weapons training with the individual members of the crew, when the November Revolution[139] broke out. When, to counter the riots in the city, patrols the size of a platoon moved through the streets, led by poised and calm older officers, they were shot at. A leading officer fell. The doorbell at the apartment of the city's commanding officer rang. When he opened the door, he was shot dead for no reason whatsoever and without him suspecting a thing, right in front of his wife and children. The same procedure was carried out at other doors. Overnight, the Red Terror suddenly reigned in the city. Sea Captain von Weise was shot treacherously in the shipyard, while he was on his way to his ship. On the most beautiful ship of the line, *König,* the first officer, Captain Heinemann, and the aide-de-camp stood up to the men who wanted to take down the imperial flag and raise the red rag. They stepped in front of the flag halyard to physically prevent the changing of the flags. They were shot down by the senseless, drunken crowd of Red sailors and shipyard workers, their dead bodies covering the old naval ensign.

The complete lack of preparedness on the part of the *Wehrmacht* in the battle against the internal enemy, against Germans, allowed the edifice of the state to collapse essentially within just a few days. In my heart, and in the hearts of those who felt as I did—and this was the majority of Germans at the time—a world fell apart. Everything we venerated, everything the Fatherland signified and symbolized to us, was shattered and swept away. I had a sickening feeling and resolved not to capitulate under any circumstance. What was my wife to me at this point? What was my child? My emperor, my emperor, he just had to come.

But by this time, an agreement had been reached at the headquarters. The emperor faced the decision as to whether he should go up against the mutineers personally with reliable troops and officers, putting his own person on the frontline. I am convinced that the

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[138] C.D. This incident is described in Chapter 17.

[139] T.N. The November Revolution began with a mutiny of sailors in Kiel refusing to continue fighting the British in a battle they saw as futile. Their cause was supported by workers in Berlin who marched to protest the ongoing financial burdens suffered by the German people during the war and the general tension between the ruling class and the general population.

majority of the *Wehrmacht* would have gone with him with twice the devotion and a tireless willingness to sacrifice. And if the emperor had fallen in this engagement, he would have entered German history as a martyr of his cause: He would have numbered among the greatest of all, and songs would have been sung, glorifying his name for generations to come. The way I believe I know him, these thoughts would have been very obvious to the emperor. But to carry them out would have meant a battle of Germans against Germans. Brotherly blood would have been spilled. For the emperor, this terrible thought was the determining factor. After Field Marshal Hindenburg alerted him to this at the crucial moment, he, weighing all the circumstances, decided to resign and go to Holland. This seemed like the best idea all the more because the enemy propaganda was constantly stating that war was not being waged against the German people but against the House of Hohenzollern. If they would step down, then peace—it was said—would immediately come to the German people in accordance with Wilson's fourteen points.[140] At the time, we were still so trusting that we believed these words. And so the emperor decided to abdicate and to release us from our oath of allegiance. He went into exile in Holland, where he died during the Second World War, having experienced—after the invasion—how German soldiers once more took up position in front of his small palace.

In Kiel, my garrison town, the situation dissolved quickly. Shots rang out everywhere, as soon as the monotonous firing of field guns and machine guns had ceased at night. Soldiers' councils formed which, following the Russian example, set out to destroy all order and create chaos. And they succeeded perfectly at it. Windows were shot at from the street and there were many shards of glass everywhere. Woe betide anyone who was seen at a window. In these horrific circumstances, I went to the shipyard to my vessel after an incredibly difficult departure from my beloved wife and son. The danger was great, but it did not scare me as much as the thought of being killed by my own countrymen. The future as such had never been more uncertain. Was there even a future at all? At the time, I wrote an account that sheds light on the end of my extraordinary time of imperial seafaring. It includes a description of the ambitious plans I had of fighting the British convoys and their escorts with my powerful, fast vessel. This account later helped a former subordinate to get an expedited promotion. Therefore, I would like to copy this account here, along with his thank-you.

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[140] T.N. A proposal made by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in a speech before Congress on January 8, 1918, outlining his vision for ending World War I in a way that would prevent such a conflagration from occurring again.

Account of the Breakout of the Flotilla Leader from the Port of Kiel at the Beginning of the November Revolution in 1918.

At the beginning of the revolution, the vessel lay in the Imperial Shipyard in Kiel. Repairs were being carried out on the engine. From the quay, revolutionaries were approaching in the dark and shooting indiscriminately at the vessels that were being repaired at the docks. At my command, the lines were cast off and in the easterly wind the boat drifted into the harbour in the direction of the Seegarten bridge, where the boat was then anchored. The crew, who were faithfully fulfilling their duties, quickly got an engine in running condition. This meant that by around 3 am, when it was pitch black, the anchor of the carefully blacked-out vessel could be lifted. Shots were fired all around. It was a war of Germans against Germans in my home garrison town. Over there where my concerned eyes were drifting were the two people to whom my whole life, the entirety of my thoughts and concerns, were devoted: my wife and my son. They were in danger, threatened by the same terrible events that we had heard about with horror from Russia. My heart cried out in pain. What was my place? Where did I belong? On the bridge of this ship or with my family?

I pulled myself together. My duty was laid out for me precisely. Honour pointed me to my ship, which I had to save for the fatherland. What use would a man without honour be to my family—a man who, in the moment when it really mattered, abandoned his duties and prioritized his personal interests? These were the thoughts that filled my mind as I slowly headed for the harbour exit. A man without honour seemed to me like an ear of grain without kernels.

It was my intention to leave the harbour no matter what, if necessary through the use of force, in order to suppress the uprising through joint efforts with other dependable vessels in the Kiel Bay. The ground fog was thick as we left the harbour in the narrow channel near the Friedrichsort lighthouse and approached the barrier that was made of beams, cables and mines. The barrier was closed and the mutineers who were operating it refused to let us through. Through the megaphone, I repeated my command to them to allow us access through the gap by slipping the cable. In response came wild ranting from the very drunk mob. Because of all the noise and the shots that were fired at us from the blocking prams, the forts at the fjord exit, which were already Red, became aware of us. They shone their floodlights on us and we heard the sound of artillery telegraphs used in the fort's heavy gun turrets. By using the searchlights to communicate in Morse code, the insurgents threatened to open fire on us if we attempted to break out. As a precaution, I had instructed the landing party to be at the ready so that, if necessary, we could use force on land as well. All boats were prepared to be deployed immediately. But first I attempted to force the breakout from the harbour with the vessel itself so as to spare the crew any possible injury or deaths. I had complete success with this, and it

never came to a deployment of the landing party. It was with the prospect of this outcome that I had the bow rudder cranked up. Then I moved the vessel slowly into the gap in the barrier. As I had hoped, the bow of my ship very gradually pushed its way over the cable, pushing it deeper and deeper into the water. With the cable, the two blocking prams—peopled now by mutinous crews—on either side of the gap were pulled down. They listed heavily to the inside and were at risk of capsizing. It was an embarrassing moment when the drunken insurgents noticed that their life depended on springing into action in a matter of seconds. It was not clear to me whether, even if they wanted to, they were in a position to release the hooks on both sides of the gap and free the cable that was currently under such tension that it threatened to snap. If this were not possible, there would be an accident. Likely, the troops in charge of operating the barrier would fall in the water and drown and I would get the cables and beams caught in my propeller and would likely be lost as well, either because the fortifications on land would exercise force against me or because the quickly formed courts of the soldiers' councils would find me guilty of murder and put me up against the wall.

Suddenly I saw how one of the two blocking prams shot up, much like a beam that slips away from a sinking ship and comes shooting out of the water like an arrow. A second later, the second pram did the same movement. I was free and didn't get any cable caught in my propeller, which I had stopped immediately. Being terrified for their lives, the mutineers had managed to slip the hook.

Now there was a great din all around. The howling of sirens, screaming, gun shots, flare shells, innumerable searchlights—everything came pouring over my stalwart vessel without costing us so much as one wounded person, fortunately. Now I was coming to the mine barrier. I was well acquainted with the serpentine passageway—the gap through it—and now I had to navigate my way through there. Because the barrier lights were not on and the floodlights were blinding me, and because of the thick fog, this was not an easy task and was a danger I had to deal with alone. In spite of the obstacles, I was able with the help of my crew to pass through to the open sea. During this exciting half an hour, our fifteen-centimetre guns were loaded and ready to fire should the land batteries begin to shoot. But they were manned by a gang without discipline or leadership, making them harmless. Ultimately will and discipline and order triumphed over the aimlessness and phrases of the Reds, who were lacking any ideal, any great idea. Indeed, they were so without character that they forgot the wellbeing of the state and the fatherland. That my vessel was able to leave the harbour—having been readied for combat and operated by a faithful crew—was a great blow to the revolutionaries, who suffered an even greater loss of dignity. Dead tired, I steered my ship to the Neuland lighthouse, where I anchored and slept for several hours. Then the cutter brought me to shore and I was connected to Kiel by telephone. I spoke with the soldiers' council and they threatened to summarily

execute me if I did not return to Kiel immediately. What they heard in response was my derisive laughter. After that I was even able to speak with my wife, whom I was able to tell very indirectly and in a way that would have been unintelligible for anyone else that I intended to sail further west. It was an incredible relief to learn that she and our son were well. I had been the one to cast the die, and now I had to trust in God and hope that He would bring us back together again.

In the next weeks, an odyssey began. It was a wading and a struggling through, through the knee-deep mud of the revolution, through lies, deception and malice. For what it is worth, I did do quite a lot of damage to the revolutionaries jointly with the cruiser Strassburg *and several other torpedo boats during this time. I did stand in their way and did my part to prevent the worst outgrowths of the revolution. My heart went out like a lamp during this time. Everything was bleak. I had no news of my wife and child who I knew were in great danger; I had no hope for the poor fatherland over which the victors were now falling without upholding in the slightest the promise of Wilson's fourteen points, and—worst of all—without showing any belief in decency and Christian charity.*

In a state of desperation from all of this, I went ashore in Gdansk like a sleepwalker. The town which had felt so familiar to me now felt strange. I wanted simply to stretch my legs, and so I set off walking aimlessly through the streets. Suddenly I found myself next to the portal of the St. Mary's Church. I could hear the soft sounds of the organ playing. A Red Cross nurse stepped out of the shadows and offered me a ticket to the concert at the church. When I was about to decline, she offered of her own accord that she knew exactly what I was going through; she could understand entirely my desperation and hopelessness. But here, here alone I would be helped and would learn to believe in life again. And her eyes as she said this were so incredibly kind. She gave me her full attention in the heartwarming, concerned and almost motherly manner that one only finds with a nun who nurses the sick—and in this case the patient was suffering from a deep psychological illness. And so, I took a ticket from the kind woman and she went in with me through the church door. How much I would like to thank her now for the medicine that she gave me, but she disappeared in the river of people in which I had to swim, and I don't know her address. But certainly, she would have continued as a quiet angel, lending a sensitive hand to those she met who were burdened by some great trouble. Inside the honourable church I was met by the song of a female voice, and violins and cellos rejoiced as well, sonorously announcing the greatness of the Lord. The ice around my heart melted. I felt how, beyond the vulgar materialism that the revolution was heaping up in front of me every day, there were eternal values that could not be sullied. In this hour of deep reflection and meditation, I learned to hope and to believe again. As a healthy man, I stepped out of the church. I felt in my deepest depths the knowledge of the everlasting nature of the divine, and indeed when my wife and I were married, the good Peter

Lo had spoken of faith, love and hope. Only now did I fully understand him and his remarks.

As I mentioned, I had made this account available to a former subordinate in 1933, though I had limited it to the military and factual parts of it. He then thanked me as follows:

Esteemed Captain!

I would like to wish you a very merry Christmas from the bottom of my heart, and at the same time, I would like to request to express my gratitude for your comradely efforts which you, Captain, undertook on my behalf. Though I may acknowledge that the success of these efforts has pleased me, I nevertheless request that you, honourable Captain, believe me when I say that my commander championing me in this way—after all, I had been out of touch for fifteen years—was a more heartfelt joy than the success itself. If you will allow me a few more words (and I may speak somewhat more freely, for I am not soliciting anything): I did not for one moment question your willingness to help. I was thinking back on past times, because you, Captain, stepped in for everyone, even for the youngest sailor, and I knew well that my former commander would stand by me when it matters. Perhaps I am not being too immodest when I hope that these words give my Captain some small joy? Today, thanking you is a matter that is very close to my heart, not only for the help in the end, but also for what necessarily had to precede it: your so very good and prudent leadership. I may remind you, Captain, of the words you spoke to us after the breakout from Kiel: 'Anyone who wants to can leave now. I don't want to have anyone here who doesn't want to stay. And if you stay, it will not be your loss. Should this mutiny become a revolution, you will still be able to manage.'

Later, as a police officer facing other difficult situations, I recalled this exemplary leadership and perhaps it was this example that taught me much. And whenever I speak to my officer candidates or very young officers, I always cite my former commander as a shining example. In fact, this was always what I did, even years ago, even before I needed your help. This should not go without mentioning. You, Captain, should know that your work of long ago was not in vain.

Yours obediently, W.M. Polizei Oberleutnant."[141]

These words of gratitude and recognition by a former subordinate understandably gave me a deep feeling of joy years later, and copying them down, they have stirred my heart once more. But my heart is moved even more by the words describing this dreadful time that were written by the commander of the Flanders U-boat flotilla, who died as a prisoner of war in Britain in March 1919:

[141] T.N. This police rank was only in use during the Nazi period.

What do I see, friends, are you drinking wine again?[142]
Don't you know what's happened?
Haven't you heard what's occurred?
Well, let me tell you.
Wait, no, fill my glass first.
A lovely glass, and why should we go easy on it?
Listen up: everyone, like me, is an Imperial Officer.
So, I ask that we raise a glass and let our Emperor live long!
Drink up! And like me raise your hand and throw your glass against the wall!
Today much is shattering that used to be whole—it's true, our Emperor is gone!
The news has just arrived at the camp:
The emperor has abdicated.
My fatherland—what was its name?
It used to be the powerful German Empire.
The flag was once black, white and red.
Many died for the principles for which it stood.
And when I found it on foreign shores,
how proud I was of this symbol.
It was not going to make way for any other.
And when we fought with the others, Yankees, French and Brits,
and all were doing good things for their king or state,
believing themselves nine times wiser,
that's when I thought: they've got no Kaiser!
Ours is made from a different mould.
I was proud of my emperor, truth be told.
It was a German empire, after all.
And always tied to German glory.
Since the time of Barbarossa,
it has been the symbol of the German Empire.
Now the old splendour has dimmed and faded.
The red flag flies upon the mast.
The German Emperor had to depart.
What will happen to Germany now?
That upon which I once built my life,
upon which I placed my hope and trust,
what was once holy and great,
now I see flowing along the gutter.
And so I lay my sword
on the scrap heap!

I somehow made my way through to Kiel and was home for Christmas. Under the Christmas tree I had my child, my Werner, in my arms. He smiled at me. My wife stood blissfully beside me; blissful about the return of her husband, about whom she had worried so

[142] T.N. With this poem, we decided in favour of retaining the (more or less) exact meaning of the lines and therefore losing the rhyme for the most part. We did try to maintain some of the rhythm.

much; blissful that she could whisper her secret in my ear, the secret that our second child was on its way. For a few moments, these feelings of happiness melted away everything around us.

But soon the dull routine of everyday life crept back in. The political tensions within the country had grown. I had to patrol up and down the port of Kiel with my vessel, day in, day out, with my guns locked and ready. It was a struggle for power between social democrats and communists. For the time being, the democrats still had the authority. In order to prevent conditions like those that prevailed in Russia, I drove like a hack driver from the borough of Kiel-Wik via the *Achtersteven*[143] to the train station, that is to say very deep into the Kiel harbour, and then equally slowly and solemnly back to the Wik. The guns were operated by the crew but also by officers.

And so, for a few weeks, I was the Lord of Kiel. Some comrades were still working at the Kiel Naval Station, trying desperately and in undignified circumstances, just like me, to mount a defence against Bolshevism. The peace treaty demanded that we search for mines near the German coast. The commander of the base told me to establish a mine sweeping flotilla and gave me complete authority over it. Thus, I found myself trotting around the shipyard looking for about twenty old torpedo boats and two steamships which I filled over the course of six weeks with everything that was required as well as personnel.

The following incident is characteristic of this time. One day a petty officer second class whom I trusted to no end approached me. He said how pleased he was to see me again in a healthy and good condition and asked me to use him on my lead boat as he was the oldest petty officer. I was happy to oblige and took pleasure in knowing that I had a truly faithful and reliable subordinate in my midst. Later, however, he broke his word and did everything to undermine my struggle for authority, first secretly and then out in the open. He had succumbed to the influence of Bolshevism and his sole aim was the destruction of intelligence.

As a base we used Sassnitz at first, then Nowy Point. One morning when I was getting dressed, I was unsettled by the sound of many feet. When I went on deck, a crowd of people surrounded me. The so-called crew had gone ashore and turned everything on its head in the night. They had broken in and there had been fights and various thefts. In response to the complaints of the agitated victims who had gathered around me, I could only shrug my shoulders and point out that the men had generally been passive during the change of government. And I added that I could do nothing to counter the

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[143] T.N. We believe this is a pier that is shaped like a sternpost or *Achtersteven.*

great changes that had come as a result, including the loosening of discipline. The victims, I said, should turn to the courts.

Another time I was wakened by the lively sound of gunshot on deck. As quickly as I could, I ran up on the deck and this scene unfolded before my eyes: about thirty meters away in the water, a swimming man's head appeared above the surface, and each time shots were fired at him from all sides. The shooters were entirely without feeling and didn't think for once that the man down there in the water was a human being. For the shooters, it was an amusing sport. I intercepted and boomed a command to cease fire, but the men only did so with great reluctance. After all, they said, the swimmer was suspected of having stolen a hawser.

As officers, our thoughts kept circling back to the question of how this had all come to be, what was behind this collapse, whether we officers were solely responsible, through our conscious or unconscious actions and failures to act. We were all heavily burdened by these internal battles and it is moving with what great precision we used the "dissecting knife" and attempted to initiate a healing process by way of thorough examinations that were all carried out in the public gaze. The driving force behind these processes, statements and actions was our profound love for the fatherland and, as always, our willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for it.

But I could not get over the chasm that I felt in my chest. I was and continued to be an imperial German officer, and nothing bound me to the new rulers, who were not entirely blameless with respect to the collapse of the imperial regime. When the day came on which the new government was to be sworn in, when Minister Noske[144] came to us, I refused to report to him with my flotilla. Taking a long look at my men, among whom were many brave soldiers, I touched my hand to the visor of my hat and uttered the anguished words: "I can't do it, I'd rather leave." I could see how some of the sailors separated from their ranks and left silently, just like me. On my boat, I sat for several minutes in my cabin, pondering. I drew in the scent of the boat, a mixture of oil, sea water and steam from cooking. Then I jumped into the dinghy that was moored to the wheelhouse and had myself rowed ashore by a watchman. How painful all of this was! At home I took off my uniform and hung it in the wardrobe. This spelled the end of my marriage to the sea, a separation that pulled me out by my roots.

[144] C.D. Gustav Noske was the first Minister of Defence of the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1920.

Elsbeth with, left to right, her third baby, Georg, and the two older boys, Kurt-Theophil and Werner,

The three younger boys, Kurt-Theo, Georg with a young puppy on his lap and Franz holding Imperial German flag during the Weimar Republic.

The three older boys, left to right, Georg, Werner and Kurt-Theophil, teaching baby brother Franz how to play croquet.

The four boys, left to right, Werner, Kurt-Theophil, Georg and Franz, with their father, Theophil.

Young Werner Gautier, standing between Werner Stephany on the left, and his father, Theophil, on the right. This photo was taken during the time of the uprisings and occupation of the early 1920s after Theophil had left the navy and become a businessman.

Part Eight
After the Great War

Chapter 23
Uprisings and Occupation

Our second son was born on our sixth wedding anniversary.[145] The streets through which I ran to fetch the doctor were the usual scene of gunfire. When I arrived back at our place with him, it was high time. We had a strong little boy, the second one. The old family tree was growing new branches. How happy and proud we felt, the young married people that we were.

Here I was, having decided to leave the service and make my own way in life, and now I packed up my family and went to Pomerania[146] to an old friend who had invited us to come to his estate, where my family could finally start "fattening up" again. This short break, one of the few I treated myself to in life, was full of joy and mice. The old manor, an outlying estate, had not been lived in very much. Hundreds upon hundreds of mice got up to their mischief in our kitchen and it seemed as if everything were moving. Paper bags set off on walks, loaves of bread were hollowed out. In the end, cats and traps helped remedy the situation somewhat.

But none of this bothered us. What was more burdensome were the new demands of our enemies. They were compiling blacklists and every officer who had made a name for himself in any way could be sure that he was added to the list and hunted. One day, approximately fifty former and currently serving naval officers were summoned to the navy headquarters in Berlin, where we were told we faced extradition. To save us this humiliation, we were given a code word to use and were advised to flee. Each of us received a fake passport and at the same time a bank account was opened for each of us at a neutral bank. And this is how they sent us off again. As much as we were proud to be counted among our opponents' fiercest enemies, we also found no peace in these circumstances, which lasted a year.

The solitary and peaceful weeks in the countryside came to an end when an opportunity arose for me to take a position with a

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[145] C.D. Kurt-Theophil Gautier, born 26 March 1919.

[146] C.D. Pomerania is a historical region now divided between Germany and Poland. It was administered by the Kingdom of Prussia until the abdication of Wilhelm II, whereupon it was divided between the Weimar Republic and Poland.

heavy industrial company in Düsseldorf. I described at the beginning how I met the director and co-owner of this company on my torpedo boat.[147] When I arrived in Düsseldorf, my full wallet was stolen in the great throng. Since then, my respect for pickpockets has only grown, all the more so as someone also stole a very beautiful and valuable cigarette case, a gift from Lilian,[148] in one of the bunker hotels. The next day, the conditions for my entry into the company were quickly agreed upon. The director was the best kind of business man. He was a decidedly friendly-looking man. Though young, he was already snow-white, which suited him very well. He had brilliant blue eyes and an air of *diablerie* tamed only by his very good manners. This man would have experienced great and well-deserved success in life had not the two lost wars brought him down each time. But he is one of those men who never strikes his colours and always fights to the end.

At first, this new position entailed a separation from my family. I began my work by myself at the iron and steel works in Erkrath. In the factory, I sought to learn my first lessons and gain knowledge. I worked in production, in metal shaping, helped stoke the cupola furnace, operated the switches on the electrical furnace and kept an eye on the Bessemer converter, which sometimes emitted eerie wheezing noises. The company was nice enough to quickly provide a blockhouse for me to live in. It was actually very lightly built and only meant to be used in the summer. But there was a severe housing shortage, and so I agreed to live there and was able to keep my wife and two children close again.

Every time I came back from the factory, completely filthy, and turned onto the garden path, our eldest son[149] would run to meet me, throwing his arms around my neck. The love between us was great and I am moved when I think of this happy time. In the lee of the house, our second son would be waiting for his father's salutations and caresses. To give expression to the enthusiasm he felt, he would start rocking his baby carriage side to side, so that in the end it was usually up on two wheels. But one time he didn't pay enough attention and the carriage tipped over. From then on, the carriage was tied to a tree with a rope to avoid a repetition of the incident. Everyone was delighted by the lively little fellow with his sunny disposition. Time and again, women would bend over the little carriage

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[147] C.D. This meeting is described in Part 1, Preface: A Balance Sheet.

[148] C.D. We believe the Lilian mentioned here is Princess Lilian of Belgium, which would fit with the cigarette case being described as beautiful and valuable. Their meeting is described in Part 9, Chapter 27.

[149] C.D. Gautier's eldest son was my father, Werner Etienne Philipp Gautier, born 15 July 1914.

and then you'd hear the charmed response, spoken in the warm Rhineland dialect: "Wat for e leckere Bübscher!"[150]

As winter arrived, however, the fun slowly came to an end. It grew bitterly cold. Through the house's joints, the stars could be seen twinkling down at us and the winter wind blew through the entire house. First our eldest son fell ill with tympanites. His mother took him to the crowded hospital in Düsseldorf and cared for him there. A few days later our second son also ran a fever. Without further ado, I wrapped him in a woolen blanket, slung the bundle over my shoulder and went splashing out into the cold and snow. It took me about half an hour to trot to the tram in Gerresheim, during which time my little son's body convulsed with shivering fits on my back. As I hurried along, terrified, I was also tormented by the song of the Erlkönig[151] which had been whistled into my ear by some evil spirit in this of all moments. Finally, I got to the hospital and was relieved upon opening the bundle to find that, though feverish, our little boy was alive. Now I knew my loved ones were in good hands and I was happy to go home.

After I had gained sufficient knowledge on the job, I was offered an administrative position. I then went into bookkeeping and later gained full signing powers in the firm. Working under the conditions of the inflation[152] was a great challenge, and working with a number of different foreign currencies came with high demands. Soon things had progressed to the point that on pay day, money had to be brought in from the bank in basket loads and later even in carriage loads. I usually found myself sitting well into the night with my accounts and balances, checking over preliminary and final calculations and managing the interactions with the various banks. By now I had been moved to the sister factory in Dülken near the Dutch border. The large factory there was managed by a business director[153] and a technical director. The former is long deceased, but I am still friendly with the latter today. An interesting man who worked his way up. Besides his great professional knowledge, he also has a vast general knowledge, which he gained as a self-taught man. For example, he knows lengthy passages of Goethe by heart and is never at a loss for a jocular speech at the dinner table. He was perfectly able

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[150] T.N. approximately "What a scrumptious little boy!"

[151] T.N. A *Lied* by Franz Schubert which sets Goethe's poem of the same name to music. The poem describes the death of a sick little boy who is carried by his father and pursued by a supernatural creature called the "Erlkönig" or "Erlking."

[152] C.D. After WWI, Germany struggled with out-of-control inflation. My father remembers seeing people pushing wheelbarrows full of cash through the streets to buy only meagre amounts of food.

[153] T.N. A handwritten note here says "Hans Giseke Helmund."

to care for his physical well-being. After the war, food was scarce, but his table enjoyed the milk and butter of two sheep, and a full cellar furnished wine for any occasion, as was only right for a jolly Rhinelander.

The company assigned me and my family a single-family house at the edge of town, which was surrounded by a beautiful garden. I can scarcely describe all the fruit it yielded. We had so many peaches that we used them as fertilizer. Fruit trees graced us with their exquisite bounty in the summer and fall. There were ample vegetables and berries. And so we feasted in this Garden of Eden as never before and likely as never thereafter. The life we had was especially good for the children. If you were looking for them you would find them sitting dreamily in a tree, looking out over the fields and munching away. Our second son was particularly fond of peaches. The only problem was that he ate so many that he sometimes got dysentery and looked pale and cheesy, which was unusual for the robust child that he was. When he was about four years old, he took it upon himself to deal with a disloyal gardener who was trying to sell baskets of fruit. Thanks to his forceful intervention, the theft was unsuccessful. Incidentally, theft flourished at the time. Our girl servant took baskets full of clothing from our house, most of which were recovered for us by the police.

A certain Brother Lustig had taken lodging in the former stable. He would always talk about God. As a greeting, he needed only the words, "You we thank, dear Father!" In the morning after he had carefully washed himself, he would throw the dirty water out the window with the thundering words, "Do you hear the sounds of the trombones?" He was a skilled carpenter and had been highly valued for his specialist work in Zeppelin airship construction. Now he was gathering a gaggle of men and women around him and declaring that the end was nigh and that God would soon deliver His strict judgement. He kept wrapping bricks in newspaper, praying to God, and then waiting for them to be transformed into loaves of bread. His lack of success did nothing to deter the throngs that congregated around him. After some time, it came to light that the holy man and his believers were so deeply involved in erotic matters that the police intervened. That put an end to the unsettling shenanigans.

During this seemingly quiet time, the political tensions were actually running high. Irregular militia groups were fighting against the Bolshevik Spartacists[154] to try to preserve the civil state. In

[154] C.D. The Spartacists were continuing the fight of the November Uprising, in support of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). The Spartacist Uprising in January 1919 had an estimated 150-200 casualties, including KPD leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Düsseldorf, the Spartacists plundered the lovely shops on the main streets. The goods, including groceries that were in short supply, were thrown on the streets and whatever wasn't stolen was stepped on and crushed. During an assembly of citizens in our community in Dülken, I was elected leader of the vigilance committee by acclamation. I divided this defence force into trades, and each made itself available on rotation. The church bell was the alarm signal. Our measures, which were sanctioned by the police, resulted in our community being spared any disturbances. Soon there were no more Belgian tanks patrolling at night, their floodlights blaring, and guns at the ready. Unfortunately for me however, these changes resulted in the occupying authorities becoming aware of me. Combined with the blacklists, this put me in danger. In the end, though, they were only interested in a very few of us black sheep. I heard that my adjutant, who had stood by my side in the minesweeping flotilla, was tied up and taken to in Leipzig, where he was tried before the Supreme Court of the Reich. Naturally, there was a strong reaction to such procedures which became visible in a growth of nationalism.

Once, when I wanted to travel to Hamburg, a Belgian passport officer refused my passage because I resisted taking the government train. These were trains run by the occupying authorities. No nationally-minded German used them. The Rhineland separatist movement developed. At times, things seemed to have progressed so far that the separation of the Rhineland from the German Reich seemed inevitable. The creation of a Rhineland state was discussed at political meetings along with measures that might contribute to a profound weakening of the divide between the Rhineland and the Reich. In the end, the hatred toward the separatist movement overflowed. One lovely day, in a quiet part of town, several separatists were killed. The identity of the killer(s) is unknown to me.

To procure foreign currency, industrial goods were smuggled past customs to Holland. This also resulted in deaths. One plan for an entire convoy delivering textiles, for which a number of daring men offered themselves as escorts, was ultimately relinquished because the consequences for Germany were deemed too severe. But I went ahead with my travels, like many others. Everyone helped one another on the trains, which were filled to the brim, with people getting on and off through the windows. Female passengers were passed in and out with their legs first. Rhineland humour triumphed.

A real estate agent explained to me that he much preferred to live under French rule than under the Prussians. The latter did everything by the books—too much so, he said. You could do better business with the French. He was an exception and was well known for his attitude. I heard that he later saw "the holy spirit" once, meaning he was beaten up.

There was a meadow in front of our house, on which stood the *Geckenmühle*. This was a kind of museum containing all kinds of souvenirs and insignia of the old Dülken carnival guild. During the carnival days the place was turned upside down. Children roved in processions and sang old songs. There was monkey business from morning to night.

My initial attempts to buy into a grey iron foundry met with success. The foundry was set up and began to produce. But then I was driven out again by all kinds of maneuvers and I lost my initial investment. My wife, in an effort to generate funds for my share, had sold the jewellery that I had given her for our wedding. A string of pearls and a diamond pendant. Oh, you dumb Augustine, all is lost![155] That was my debut in the business world.

Back then we also built davits[156] for ships in the factory, among other things. This was of course especially interesting to me. I carefully studied their design and the way they were produced. One day when I was standing enthralled in front of an almost-completed davit, I thought of the difficulties that arose when one wanted to lower a boat into the water from a ship that was listing. This was something I had observed many times during the war. As quick as lightning, the following idea came to me: if one were to always store the boats on an inclined plane, they would easily slide down when unlatched. This would be the case as long as the ship's incline was not greater than the incline of the boat mount. I went on to refine this idea and draft an acceptable patent application with the help of a patent lawyer. Because the idea was new and good, the German patent office granted me the patent number 393615 on February 22, 1922. It was described as a "boat launching system." Shortly after I had been granted the patent, I was contacted by a representative of a world-renowned English davit company.[157] They produced pivot davits and understandably must have seen the use of my "inclined plane" patent to be a welcome addition. When I was asked what my conditions were, I asked that I be allowed to carry out practical tests onboard, in cooperation with a capable naval engineer. Also, to be given a certain salary during this time and later a share in the production profits. I'm sure my demands were too modest, however; I was turned down. When I could no longer pay my patent fees due to the increasing inflation, especially in the countries with hard currencies, I fell by the wayside and for everyone else it was business as usual. Today, no proper ship sails without davits that are a

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[155] T.N. A reference to the Viennese folk song "O du lieber Augustin." Normally it's "dear" Augustine.

[156] C.D. Small cranes used to lower a small boat, such as a lifeboat, from a ship into the water.

[157] C.D. A handwritten note indicates this was "Welin."

combination of a pivoting davit and my "inclined plane," with adjustments depending on the application. Another opportunity to create an independent and decent business for myself had fallen flat. That was my second experience in the business world.

In the factory, we had many visitors from other countries. The selling off of Germany, encouraged as it was by the galloping inflation, was moving forward vigorously. Because of my knowledge of English and my familiarity with dealing with foreigners, I was often put to use as interpreter and guide. One time, when I found myself telling a very well-educated and kind Dutchman about my woes regarding the monetization of my patent, he consoled me sincerely. And when he then sensed my deep-felt sorrow about the course of time and my dearly lacking sense of satisfaction, he gave me the following words as a gift that would accompany me throughout my life: "If you can't realize your ideals you must idealize the reality." This clever and warm-hearted saying has faithfully helped me through a number of dark times.

Another time I served as a guide to an English foundry engineer. As we stood up on the charging platform, watching the open and glowing maw of the oven be stoked, the Englishman asked me what I would do if the worker down there accidentally fell into the oven. I instantly gestured toward the oven and responded that I would do everything within my power to save the man. The Englishman laughed and said laconically, "Shut the door, bar it, and let the man burn. There is nothing you can do for him anyway. But that's the way you Germans are, sensitive and sentimental. That's the difference between you and us Englishmen."

When it was time to eat, he asked for a whisky and soda. In Germany at the time this was a great extravagance, because of the inflation. I let him know that the price had risen—as it had in England as well, as far as I knew—due to the war. In response came the cool words, "I thank you for it." As a matter of course, we Germans were being blamed for the war and for the prices having gone up. No consideration was given whatsoever to the possibility that England might have been partly responsible.

It was in this contemplative time, which was also filled with a lot of work to gain a foothold in my new career, that our third and fourth sons were born.[158] And so our house became livelier. My poor wife was at times drowning in work, what with house chores and the four children and the garden. Often, there was no help of any kind. It was very hard to come by and if you did find someone, they were usually not worth much.

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[158] C.D. Georg Ludwig Gautier, born 1 June 1921, and Franz Christoph Gautier, born 28 July 1923.

We celebrated the christenings with great ceremony. I recall how, when our youngest, Franz Christoph, was christened, I gave a short speech in which I emphasized how he would do honour to his middle name of Christoph and would carry Christ not only on his shoulders but deep in his heart. And Franzl went on to live his short life this way, as all who knew him can testify.

A shadow was cast over these quiet years, however. My beloved uncle, the guardian of my youth, died. I had to go to Saarbrücken to his grave so as to at least pay my last respects to this man who meant so much to me. At the border to the Territory of the Saar Basin, a French border officer forbade me from going any further. And so I befriended a German railwayman who entrusted me with his passport. As a railwayman I then arrived in Saarbrücken just in time to join the funeral procession. It was a sad reunion, including seeing the graves of his wife, his son and my good grandmother. Everything felt so unreal. It seemed that all of the mourners were left over from an older time, and we didn't fit into the present-day world that surrounded us and felt cold, brutal and calculating. Each man had time only for himself and his own needs. Incidentally, we were united only by the feeling of rebellion against the degrading treatment by the occupying powers. For this reason, the officiating clergyman left the present situation completely out of it. After referring to three sons of the deceased who had fallen victim to the war, he conducted his eulogy on an entirely philosophical playing field. The clever speaker illuminated all the soulfulness our German sensitivity has to offer and by doing so painted a crystal-clear image of my uncle, who was moving in his kindness and possessed such a rare kind of humour and cheerfulness that he made his life and the lives of those around him warm and beautiful. As the soil from the shovels began to fall on his coffin, the clergyman called to him, "Ave pia anima."[159] This timeless greeting was more befitting than any prayer. And so I bid farewell to my stand-in father, who in my memory is enjoying his happy days before the war. And this is how he lives on for me, as an example of a fulfilled person, secure in himself.

Impishly proud of having gone through with my trip despite being prohibited from it, I returned home to a letter from the chief of police informing me that he was no longer able to guarantee the safety of my home and family. He wrote that I was so hated by the mob as a result of my activities as leader of the vigilance committee that he could only recommend that I move away. This was a severe blow. Fearing for my loved ones, I was forced to seek a new occupation. We prepared ourselves for a move. And then my wife and I got on our bicycles and went off to bid farewell to our acquaintances and the Rhineland. I felt like going to the Eifel mountains first, to the

[159] T.N. Approximately "Hail pious soul."

Idylle estate where my old great uncle had lived with his well-stocked store room. As we approached the gate of the estate, we heard piercing screams of pain. We ran toward them and found an adolescent boy impaled on the iron garden fence. One of the iron lances had gone through his calf and now he was stuck helplessly up on the fence. As if by miracle, we arrived by bicycle just in time to save the grandson of our coachman, who was so central in the memories of my youth.

Once again, I enjoyed bathing myself in the room with a pool and then spent a night in the estate that I had known for so long. It was the final opportunity: because the soil there was volcanic ash, known as *Trass*, the estate was sold and fell victim to a Portland cement factory. It was with great wistfulness that I said goodbye to it the following day. Once again, a piece of my world was sinking that had once lovingly embraced me.

From here, we went to the Rhine, where my old aunt Ida was spending her days in one of the castles there. She had grown quite old. And she, too, had lost her son Hans, who was a pilot, in the final weeks of the war. This loss had aged her significantly. And yet it was so warm and wonderful to be sitting with her again. Surrounded by her dogs, including a large Dalmatian, she was a dazzling spirit and her Rhineland sense of humour warmed the room.

A telegram called us home. One of the children had fallen ill and it would be good if his mother took care of him.

And then a professional opportunity came up in Kiel and a temporary apartment was available to us. We packed up our worldly belongings and shipped them off. Now it was time to go to the sea, which drew me close with all its power.

Chapter 24
Friends and Family

After a tedious search, we finally found a lovely permanent home in Heikendorf, at the Stauenkamp. It was a villa meant for one family, with seven rooms. It therefore had plenty of space for our family of six. All around was a beautiful and quite extensive garden, with old, fruit-bearing trees and berry bushes. There was also a garage and toolshed cum chicken coop. The property was about a twenty-minute walk from the Kitzeberg steamship bridge and was out in the open, with a view of the meadows, hedgerows and beech woods, all the way down to the blue Kiel Fjord.

Not even five minutes away was the golf course, whose dapper clubhouse was the domain of Mutter Rühr. Her husband produced wooden clogs and she provided the athletes with food and drink. All of us recall with boundless gratitude the way she looked after us. Our boys adored her and loved the exquisitely warm and cozy teatimes that we enjoyed there after playing. What wonderfully toasted bread with delectable orange marmalade, served with rich milk!

And so our boys grew up with golf clubs in their hands, learning to play well at a very young age. Our youngest, Franzl, became junior master and defended our flag as a member of the German team in Sweden, Italy and England. He went there just before the outbreak of the second war. When he was asked by an English journalist if he was concerned about being surprised by the war, he answered cheerfully, "Why worry?" When he had boarded the train in Vienna which would take him to England, we had agreed on a code word which, given the tense situation, I could communicate to him by telegraph. Upon hearing it, he was to return immediately. We couldn't come up with a good word right away. As the train was pulling out and I was walking alongside his open window, I had a burst of inspiration and called to him, "'Bankruptcy,'[160] the code word is 'bankruptcy'! When you see it leave right away!" He waved at me, smiling, as a sign that he'd understood.

Unfortunately, I had to telegraph him and the telegram fulfilled its purpose not only with regard to the return of our Franzl, but it also served as a correct prognosis of the dreadful war. If only this unholy telegram had not been sent. Then our Franzl would have stayed over there and would have presumably been saved. Instead, just a few days before the end of the madness, he was torn from us[161] as a fallen soldier near Budrio in northern Italy. To the very end, his

[160] T.N. *Pleite* in German; other translations are fiasco, failure, broke etc.

roguish laughter lit his face, which was a comfort to all who knew him. Now he lies in the Po basin as an unknown soldier and we cannot even console ourselves with tears at his grave, perhaps soothing the pain we feel each and every day over the loss, which stems from our great and burning love for our son.

In the Stauenkamp house, we had our best times as a very happy family. We had animals of every kind. Our eldest son raised doves who were so tame that they ate out of his hands and perched on his shoulders. We also had goats, geese and chickens. Georg got into beekeeping. Working with his older brother, Kurt Theo, he went about this work following all the professional rules. I can still see them with their veiled suits and smokers working at the hives. All of this achieved substantial results—so substantial that all door handles in the house were sticky with honey and the bees that had been riled up went in hot pursuit of the honey thieves. At the time, a young Englishman, Norman, was living with us. He was the son of a university professor and was doing an exchange with our sons. Beekeeping was something new for him and he found it incredibly interesting. The bees were very nice as long as they minded their manners in the beehive. But when they grew nasty when their honey was being taken and began to dole out their beestings, he ran to his room, closed the door and window and now all we could hear was his indignant cry, "nasty, nasty bees!"

All four sons would go abroad during the summer vacation to learn languages and become acquainted with foreign countries. Though it was difficult to find enough of the required foreign currencies, we always managed in the end. Our two oldest boys went one after the other to Harmondsworth and stayed with the lovely family of Reverend Ross. When our sunny lad Kurt Theo said goodbye to the Reverend, who lay sick in bed, there was a moving scene as the old gentleman had come to hold our son very dear.

Georg was also in France. Another time he rode with the British Vice Consul Girling, who was our friend, in his car through Switzerland and France and on to England. And Franzl went abroad many times as an athlete. In England when the war was breaking out and he, as I've mentioned, participated in the golf competition as a German junior master, he was carried on the shoulders of his young British sports friends to the train station and was movingly showered with gifts from them and their parents. One must not say, then, that it was hatred and embitterment that led by necessity to the wars.

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[161] C.D. A particular tragedy of Franz's death is how close he came to surviving the war, as he was killed on April 20, 1945. His parents were not informed of his death for almost a year, and for that time believed he had survived as a prisoner of war. This story is told in Part 10, Chapter 28: A Further Heartbreak.

The peoples want peace and the ties between individuals across all borders are very strong. Wars are waged by interest groups who unleash the catastrophe of a technological war on the poor population at large for selfish reasons or out of an arrogant sense of power or because their little thrones have begun to wobble.

Our two youngest sons, incidentally, were both in England. They stayed with our guest and friend of those days who put on Shakespearean plays in Germany with his friends. This was in Worthing, a beach town on the North Sea, and yet again, they were shown a very good time.

Over the years, we got to know more British people who visited us in our home. For example, Mr. Shebeare, protector of the unicorn, and Mr. Bonington, a former ship's carpenter. Both of them were from the British administration in India. Bonington had worked his way up to a senior position in the British wood resources department of the Andaman Islands through a special deed: When there was an accident with the ship and the onboard British troops and horses were in grave danger, Bonington pulled off a fortunate rescue of the men and animals by putting his own life on the line. This resulted in generous Britain opening the way to a career in forestry for him and later awarding him the highly esteemed decoration O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire). Shebbeare[162]and Bonington were wrangled into telling our boys one story after another. They captured the boys' imagination with tales of efforts made to preserve the unicorn. The horn, they said, is considered to have healing powers and, ground to a powder, it is sold at great prices to the native Chinese as a precious medicine. It was for this reason that unicorns had been hunted for generations and decimated. The penal law imposed by the British authorities, who did not want to see the increasingly endangered animal go extinct, did nothing to change this either, they said. It was up to Mr. Shebbeare among others to see to it that the animal was preserved, and so he waged a fierce and dangerous war against the cruel hunters who had no mercy for unicorns.

Sir Wyndham Deede[163] came to be another benevolent protector of our children. He visited us one day at our nice house at Wannsee (Stölpchensee) and was very reserved. But when he heard that the entire family were golfers and that especially the youngest of our sons, Franzl, had really excellent play, he loosened up considerably and then turned out to be a wonderful friend who was always ready to help out. After our second collapse, he was the first to write to us from England, and he did so in the same warm and heartfelt manner as always, saying that he was available to help us at all times.

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[162] T.N. Which spelling is correct remains unclear.

[163] T.N. This is very likely Brigadier-General Sir Wyndham Henry Deedes.

For our sons, the most joyful moment came when their mother—they called her Mo—had the initiative to get a pony with a cart for them. The pony was very spirited and threw over the cart, giving us scratches and bruises. But after we exchanged the first pony for a calmer one, we went on day-long rides to the wonderful beach in Wentorf, a trip of about an hour, all summer long. The memories we made then are among the most wonderful we have. We cooked our lunches over a campfire and these primitive meals tasted better than the most exquisite Sunday dinner.

During the cooler time of the year, we went hiking with our sons on Sundays in the large woods that surrounded us. There was an easily recognizable rampart in the middle of the beech forest and in the centre of it was a catacomb. It always felt a bit eerie as we tried to get inside it. People called the structure "the grave of the countess." She, in any case, had sought out a beautiful spot for her eternal sleep, a place of exquisite peacefulness.

Then there was a certain white stag that we would track down in the thick undergrowth. If we were lucky, we would see him and he too prompted the boys to make all kinds of comments and observations. Winnetou[164] wouldn't have been able to sneak up in his moccasins any more soundlessly than they, and they employed all the artfulness of an experienced tracker. With such experiences, the boys grew bigger and bigger, healthy in body and soul, and I can't imagine a more harmonious family life.

Nevertheless, we parents were shouldering many worries. With the help of friends and my father-in-law, as well as the remainder of my once quite considerable fortune, I was just able (despite difficulties) to get a medium-sized grey iron foundry up and running as a public limited company with a share capital of two hundred thousand marks. The capital was insufficient, however, and the works had to operate with constant debt. And so I was never able to pay all the bills and this constant worry ate away at my health. But in the end things always kept going. Finally, a coincidence gave me the opportunity to get out of these circumstances, which in the long run were not bearable. I was able to mediate and resolve some disagreements between two larger companies whose directors I knew. This got me some attention. Shortly thereafter, I received a thank-you letter from the director of one of the two involved companies, Minimax, inviting me to drop by at the office of the director general in Berlin if the occasion arose. The upshot of this visit was that I entered a very valuable contract with the company, which relieved me of all pecuniary worries

[164] T.N. The fictional Native American hero of famous novels by the German author Karl May.

The Gautier family during the Weimar Republic years of the 1920s. Left to right: Werner standing, Theophil seated (for unknown reason in Navy uniform since he had quit the Navy and was a private businessman), Kurt-Theophil standing with arms drapped over his parents' shoulders, little Franz at his parents' knees, Elsbeth in red, and Georg on far right.

The Gautier family in the peacetime of the early 1930s, left to right, Werner, Georg, Kurt-Theophil, Elsbeth, Theophil and Franz.

The house in the lakeside neighborhood of Stölpchensee in Berlin in which the Gautier family lived in the 1930s. It siill stands at 15 Glienicker Strasse and looks the same today except for a modern fence.

Above: Theophil as a travelling businessman in the 1920s.

Chapter 25: A Travelling Businessman

Now an extraordinarily interesting and successful phase of my life was beginning. Our home remained the same and my family could stay peacefully in our dear house without a worn-out and worried father around. I spent weeks at a time in Berlin and Neuruppin, working hard to learn about the company's extensive production program. It was a joy to me, however. Everything was so extraordinarily interesting. I had to focus on two areas. First, there was fire extinguishing, which was the world-renowned company's original area of activity. Then there was the work in the military division, which produced fog devices, flame throwers and irritant gas devices. Both were areas that interested me profoundly and still today I pay great attention to the developments and innovations that take place in these areas.

When I was sitting firmly in the saddle and was beginning to win the trust of the directors, I was sent all across Europe to demonstrate the engineering. With my harrowing memories of ship fires during the war, I emphasized the necessity of giving special attention to onboard fire extinguishing. Ultimately, everything that had to do with fire extinguishing on shipyards and on ships was separated out from the rest of the organization and reassigned to me as the head of the newly established naval department. On the company's large test sites near the factory in Neuruppin, the practice had so far been to show how fires in life-sized oil tanks were extinguished. Despite having seen it many times, it continued to be an astonishing sight for us when an oil fire in a tank produced a howling gale, filled the entire area with its black smoke and its fearful columns of flames only to collapse within less than a minute under our extinguishing foam, lying down like a growling dog. From this it followed that, upon my request, we set up one section of a ship in a true-to-life manner, complete with double-bottom cells, set fire to the fuel oil in the cells and then repeated, to great effect, the spectacle of fire extinguishing. To this end, fire extinguishing mechanisms were built into the mock-up that would go off by themselves once a certain temperature had been surpassed. This is how ships became equipped with stationary fire extinguishing systems. Where, previously, pipes had been installed that would let sea water into the ship to put out fire, now there were new pipes for the thick, carbon dioxide-containing foam that could extinguish the dangerous fire in a compartment. Now, seawater came in and was mixed with the extinguishing powder contained in foam generators that were installed in a number of places on the ship, and so every fire could be put out reliably.

It was so impressive, in fact, that the *Reichsmarine*[165] decided to equip its armored ship *Deutschland* with the first of these stationary fire extinguishing systems. I could truly breathe easier after this, for one thing because the great costs of testing the system were now justified. And then there was the sense of how it benefited navigation as a whole. In my memory I had images of all the burning ships that I had seen, and they were abominable to me, images of incomparable human misery. In my own way, I had contributed to taming these dangers and so my experiences, in a manner of speaking, were paying off. It was a delight to my heart. Today, you find these kinds of systems on almost all ships, or at least all those fueled by oil. Additionally, on the bridges of modern ships, you find other devices developed by us that alert the bridge personnel the moment there is fire or excessive heat in any of the compartments. In case the automatic extinguishing system fails, it is therefore possible to put out the fire simply by pulling a lever. This far-reaching provision provides navigators and personnel with a reassuring sense of security. If one considers this in conjunction with the ideas I mentioned I had regarding storing ship's boats on an incline, I think I can justly claim that I have been of service to seafaring, which I loved so much.

But the military department as well caused me to be heavily involved in the company. It was the late 1920s, and we were very preoccupied with developing a fog device to be installed on airplanes and used in frontline action. After the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was not permitted to engage in any kind of aviation at all. Thus, all we could do was try to remedy in a theoretical way some of the difficulties that arose during construction. When we had gotten to the point that we believed everything was in working order, it became a pressing matter, whatever the cost, to do a practical test of the apparatus. The only way this could happen was with the help of a state that had been neutral in the last war. I dedicated myself to this task fully and I was able to open up certain possibilities. And so I set off for that country and after various carefully conducted negotiations with the government agencies in charge and with the military, I was able to enjoy complete success. We tested our apparatuses not only theoretically but finally in the field as well, made several improvements and became at least equals with our competition, including foreign competition. This assured us, and now I was able to go on my sales trips with a completely different élan. I travelled all over Europe. In quick succession, I went through Sweden, Denmark, Holland, the Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Hungary. There were also plans for trips across the ocean.

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[165] T.N. The Empire's Navy, the German Navy during the Weimar Republic and the first two years of Nazi Germany.

One day the director general summoned me to him by telephone. You tended to feel some pressure in situations like these. But in a friendly manner, he asked me to take a seat and offered me a cigar. So I didn't have to worry. He then surprised me by asking if I was following the war between the two South American states,[166] which had been fought bitterly in the rainforest for months now. He wondered if I agreed that flame-throwers, irritant gas and fog devices could be successfully put to use there. Certainly, I replied. The only problem was that we did not have any factories over there. The director general responded by saying that as soon as the first orders were in, they could be filled in the quickest way via sea or air. The main thing was to get those orders in as quickly as possible. Now the question was, was I prepared to set off with a sample order, to go to the front, and to make use of the sample machinery as necessary, and then send a cable with the expected orders?

This was just the task my adventurous heart desired. Without hesitating for a moment, I said yes. I would put together a caravan and get my delivery to the right place using pack animals. The only thing I needed was an absolutely reliable person by my side, and so I asked if my eldest son, who was in his final year of high school at the time, could accompany me. The answer was yes, and he granted me all the money I needed, saying that he trusted me entirely. And when could I leave? Tomorrow evening, as soon as my son was home. Now it was the director general who was surprised. Surely this wasn't possible! Didn't I need to equip myself, for example? I would do that on board, I said, where good tailors could be found. And I would do all the necessary arrangements with the onboard telegraph when I was on my way to South America. The director general, scratching his head, said, "Captain, you seafaring men are cut from a different cloth! Had I asked anyone else, he would have first wanted some time to think about it, and then he would have come back with all kinds of ands, ifs and buts. And you are ready to head out without hardly a question! Hats off to you!"

This task—perhaps the most wonderful and original in my lifetime—ended up amounting to nothing in the end because of forces beyond my control. Fourteen days later the Director General was dead.[167]

The trips I took to demonstrate the devices resulted in a number of unique situations. In Yugoslavia, I was supposed to demonstrate

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[166] C.D. Based on the timing of these events, the conflict referred to here may be the Paraguayan Civil War (1922-1923), rather than a war between two states.

[167] C.D. I think I can safely assume that this trip did not happen. My father, Werner, was very reserved, but an adventure like this might have merited at least an anecdote.

how a large area could be engulfed in fog. I spent the whole day up on the majestic Kalemegdan with the old fortress at the "knee," at the confluence of the Danube and the Save. You could feel the ghost of Prince Eugene coming from every nook in the walls and the ramparts. "He had a bridge built, so that they could cross".[168] I had made up my mind: I wanted to carry out the fog demonstration below the fortress on the Save in such a way that all of Belgrade would see it, but without the fog spreading its kind veil over everything and thus interfering with traffic. It would attract a great deal of attention. This prompted me to go right away to see the defence minister, General Kalafatovic.

From the waiting room, I sent my calling card with my former military title into his office and was received right away. He was a gracious, highly educated older gentleman. I told him of my plans, my intentions of speaking to all branches of the armed forces so as to offer them my devices and invite them to the demonstrations I intended to carry out. But as a former active Imperial Officer, I felt it was my duty to inform the Defence Minister of my intentions as they, after all, involved important military devices and I did not want to be suspected of spying on the armed forces of which he was in charge. To this attitude of mine, which he obviously liked, the old gentleman responded with a chivalric comment. Then we chatted for some time and discovered that we had some acquaintances and even friends in common. When I had then said my goodbyes and was standing, hand poised on the door handle, I suddenly heard from behind me the deep and sonorous voice of a soldier, saying: "Have you not had enough of the wops (Italians)?" I replied that politics often enough followed its own course and had nothing to do with likes and dislikes. And then the old gentleman laughed heartily when I added that I wasn't going to travel to Italy on my tour as the wine here was more to my liking. I had found a friend and a protector in the old man, which was important to me. After all, shortly thereafter, my fate would have caught up with me when I was called in to have a talk with an anti-German general at a gunpowder factory at the bloody Vardar River.[169] He would have been all too happy to put me behind bars on suspicion of espionage. The hours I had to spend standing in front of his desk were extraordinarily nerve-wracking.

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[168] T.N. Theophil quotes: "*Er ließ schlagen eine Brukken, daß man kunt hinüberrucken*". The two lines are from the Austrian-German folk song "*Prinz Eugen, der edle Ritter*" (Prince Eugene, the Noble Knight) about the victory of Prince Eugene of Savoy in 1717 during the Austro-Turkish War of 1716–1718.

[169] T.N. The battle of the Vardar, 15–29 September 1918, was the decisive battle on the Balkan Front of the First World War.

My friend Seppel Konjovic accompanied me from Petrovaradin to Belgrade. He was a naval engineer in the former Austro-Hungarian Navy and later an engineer on trade ships, and had sailed the seven seas. And he was kind and great fun to have along. When we were boarding the train for Belgrade in Novi Sad, I had my suitcase with me and I asked him, surprised, where his was. His easy answer was that his brother lived in Belgrade. This satisfied me entirely. But then in Belgrade, he took the hotel room next to mine. In the evening, we went to the "Ruski Lyra" where Russian emigrants played wonderful music. Some of the visitors were from the Russian troops of General Wrangel, who, dressed in their imperial uniforms, were being hosted in Yugoslavia, their formations intact. At the time, they were still hoping to become useful in bringing the Czar's empire back to life. Whatever happened to these enthusiastic patriots I cannot say. In any case, most of them would not have been delivered from this vale of tears by dying the death of a soldier.

As I tried to fall asleep, the fate of these brave soldiers still preoccupied my mind. The next morning, while I was engaged with the duties of the toilette, the door opened and a sleepy Konjovic wandered in, his trousers pulled on sloppily and his suspenders hanging majestically about his waist. He asked for my shaving equipment, which I provided, albeit with some hesitation. Sometime later, the door opened again and Mr. Konjovic returned the brush, soap and razor and thanked me. Then he had a close look at my washstand, turned to me and with a placatory smile uttered the words, "Communism, Captain. I'll also take your comb and brush." What else could I do but agree, but out of caution I added, "The communism, dear Seppel, stops at the toothbrush. You're not getting that." I cannot say for certain whether or not a shadow of displeasure crossed his face. In any case it would have been more over my attitude toward communism than over the unsubmitted toothbrush.

Downstairs in the dining room, that is, in the large, poorly ventilated lounge where the smell of tobacco and wine still hung in the air from the night before, I sat down at one of the small round marble tables. They reminded me vividly of the tables behind which Penelope's suitors hid when furious Odysseus was going after them with his bow and arrow. In the evening, Seppel had given me an extensive account of how, in his lifetime, in the royal palace opposite us, the king and his relations were murdered and thrown out the window. This is how things could have gone with Odysseus if there had been multi-story buildings in the time of the divine swineherd Eumaeus. Looking around, I noticed that I was now the centre of attention, and that I'd made myself unpopular. The people at all the neighbouring tables were wearing collarless shirts, their trousers were simply pulled on and their suspenders were happily hanging down. I was in violation of this happy and casual lifestyle and was

hence unpopular: I had ignored the code of conduct, foolishly placing myself outside this guild. I quickly ate up two delicious white buns, gulped down a cup of coffee and vamoosed.

In Petrovaradin, Seppel and I climbed the steep hill to the old fortress. The lyrics of Prince Eugene's song were humming in my ear:

Prince Ludwig breathed his last,
his young life he had to give.
With leaden bullets he was shot
And then he was dead.
Prince Eugene was shattered,
because he loved him so much.
To Petrovaradin:
That's where he had him sent.

Now a foreign flag flew over the stronghold and only the magic of the past still stirred in every corner of the old castle.

I met with the presiding Air Force General Nedic and invited him to watch the demonstration I planned to give of my fog device and flame thrower. This general made an excellent impression on me and was definitively the best qualified officer alongside the Defence Minister Kalafatovic. After I had explained my intentions and the devices at length, and following our most interesting discussion of military matters in general, I bid him farewell with a deep feeling of respect for this kind and high-ranking person and general, who with gallant openness made no secret of his anti-German stance.

Tired, dusty and sweaty, we arrived back at the hotel. Just as he was, with his dusty clothes and his dirty boots, Seppel in a renewed activation of his communist feelings took a leap and landed stretched out on my bed, instantly marking it with the dreck from his clothes. In my reactionary state, I sighed and, with resignation, sat down at my small travel typewriter to write my daily report to the directorate general in Berlin. Seppel couldn't believe his eyes and said the following momentous words that were ripe with meaning, "You Germans are fabulous fellers! You don't give yourselves a moment's rest. You always have to work. It's inevitable that you'll conquer the world. That, or the world will unite and shatter you as a bothersome competitor." If this pithy simplicity of thinking had prevailed in our foreign office, things would be better for us today. *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not*.

The first demonstration of the fog device at the Danube knee went according to plan. As I had intended, all of Belgrade was soon covered in a veil of ever-thickening fog. Everyone coughed and sneezed and so I had the eyes of all the ministries and all the residents on me as the source of the trouble. The daily papers also wished all kinds of good things on me! The demonstration, in other

words, was a hit. You could not think of more effective propaganda and it was clear either way that business would be good.

When, several days later, I demonstrated devices for ground warfare, I added to my program significantly. A platoon of soldiers was made available to me and I stepped in personally as the platoon commander. And so we put on a demonstration for the numerous generals and admirals who had assembled as well as for an officer corps of 100 men, showing them a modern assault with fog grenades, flame throwers and machine guns that were used in an alternating and mutually reinforcing fashion. In addition to this, a dozen powerful stationary fog devices that were positioned in a nearby racecourse released their vapours. This gave an awe-inspiring image of modern warfare. Success was not long in coming. All of the trucks and vehicles used to take the spectators there and back landed in the ditches, and in the fog, I could see the glowing red lapels of the generals who were clambering out of their vehicles and were now waiting—sniffling and with tears in their eyes—for the nightmarish spectacle to end.

Word of my efforts in Belgrade travelled as far as Romania. One day, Mr. Carol Blaymayer and his companion Alexander Bratulescu showed up and asked if I would give a demonstration like that in Bucharest. Without delay, a telegram granting me permission arrived from Berlin. In the end, however, the demonstration did not take place because the main person who was to clear the way for me in Bucharest was locked away in a mine due to communist involvement. Increasingly I was under the impression that strong communist infiltration could be felt in Yugoslavia as well. I began to understand why when I witnessed the treatment of troops on one occasion. They were being kicked by their superiors so mercilessly that I as an outsider intervened in a placatory manner. Incidentally, the Dutch military also gave me the impression, despite the humane treatment by the superiors, of a certain rebelliousness or contrariness. Everywhere in the structure of our social order, you can hear the crackling and popping. If we are not careful, the foundation pillars could soon crumble. From hatred and profit-seeking grave errors are made.

I can tell you my own story about this. At the age of 67,[170] I am trying to secure a living for myself and find myself in negotiations about a friendly merger with a Swiss company. As I receive no pension whatsoever and my fortune is being taken away from me by the currency reform,[171] I have to find a source of income for me and my loved ones if I don't want to starve. After endless efforts and preparations, I received notice today from the British occupation authority

[170] T.N. A note in the margin here says "After the Second World War"
[171] T.N. In 1948, the Deutsche Mark replaced the Reichsmark.

that my request had been denied: I am not allowed to travel. Can it be right to proceed this way with a man who made no secret of his Western attitude? A man who had risked his neck with Dr. Gördeler.[172] If I were less educated, I would inevitably be pushed into the arms of the Communists. But as this is impossible with me, all that remains is an incredible bitterness and disappointment. One day, people will rue the consequences of this disastrous mindset and this mistreatment of the decent German people.

I could rest satisfied with my success in Yugoslavia and Romania. As a result, we had ongoing business in both countries. Carol and Alexander as well as Carol's wife came to our house numerous times. I still recall how Frau Blaimayer would hold hands with our sons, skating back and forth on the little pond beside the water tower that overshadowed our house, and then, in the evening, how she would sit by the fireplace, exhausted, and read *The Little Lord Fauntleroy* to Georg because Georg had the manner of a little Lord.

Carol and Alexander became very wealthy people, and later hosted our youngest son Franz in Bucharest. On their invitation, he travelled there from Vienna during the school holidays. Our Franzel left us a chronicle of this trip, which I will include below: "Golf Vacation in Romania." Unfortunately, I have to say that I have not heard anything from Carol and Alexander since this last contact through our son. They were drafted as reserve officers and I fear that the war and the post-war time have swallowed them up, just as our beloved Franzelchen was swallowed.

When I look around, it is the same everywhere. Gaping emptiness and a loss of love and affection that cannot be replaced.

After all the excitement and exertions, I was glad to be back in my first-class seat on the train on what would be an almost two-day voyage back home. During this long train ride, the memoirs of Napoleon and the charming book *Mademoiselle de Maupin,* written by my namesake, Theophil Gautier, entertained me. When I arrived in Berlin, the company's new director general had commenced his position, and it was communicated to me that he was about to cut staff drastically and that I was in danger, despite my successes. I knew immediately that I would have to fight once more. A worried man with a worried mind, I made my way to his room. It was already late afternoon, but as my slogan went: eat quickly, digest quickly. I wanted to precipitate the decision right away.

At the very moment I arrived at his door, it was opened with a jerk, such that I had to jump backward to avoid getting a bruise. Out

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[172] T.N. Presumably Carl Friedrich Goerdeler, a monarchist conservative who opposed the Nazi regime and would have been Chancellor of the new government had the assassination attempt on Hitler of July 20, 1944 been successful.

came the new wielder of power. I answered his inquiry as to who I was very briefly, in a military manner. What did I want? "I was wondering," I said, "what it says on the paper posted on the door." His gruff answer was: "Feindt"—this was the new director's name[173]—and this was most definitely a declaration of war. He was a German expatriate and had spent a long time in Cameroon, and I understood that I was dealing with someone who had lived overseas and was certainly not one-sided and narrow-minded. Tall and powerful in stature, he was visibly apoplectic. These were characteristics that seemed advantageous in the battle that was ahead of me. I accompanied him down the stairs to the main exit, telling him about my recent trip. He stopped at the door, paused for a moment, and said, "My family hasn't arrived yet and I'm alone this evening. What are your plans?" I replied that it was the same for me and that I had to find something to do with the evening. He bit down on this string of temptation like Widow Bolte's chickens.[174] "We could do something together." He wanted me to come up with a plan, and as Director General he would pay for everything. I was to pick him up at his hotel in an hour. This was the opportunity I had been waiting for, the opportunity others had missed as they kept their focus solely on business.

I immediately ran over to the Wintergarten theatre on Friedrichstraße and, with money and good words, secured for us the best table across from the stage on the balustrade. Then I summoned a waiter and placed an order for two sumptuous meals and even better and plentiful drinks. In the hours that followed, Herr Feindt and I got on famously and had the jolliest of times. Thinking back to an event in the past, I asked the performer on stage to trumpet like an elephant, cluck like a chicken, and bray like a donkey. The audience had already become aware of the two gleeful guests. And then came the smasher: "Now do a canned sardine!" The audience exploded and Feindt nearly died laughing.

In this way I ensured a very harmonious evening. The extent of the bill played no role whatsoever in our bliss; we tipped handsomely and everyone loved us. Out on the street, we sang student songs with great enthusiasm. I recall that, singing songs from *Old Heidelberg*—while standing outside the bierkeller of the same name—we became ununited in our pitch. Feindt hollered, "B-flat, you ass!" and I replied, "You're flat, you beef!" This comeback impressed Feindt to no end. He embraced me and boomed in a voice that could be heard for miles, "Captain, Captain. You are a capital fellow. You've got to keep working with me. I can't sail without you, Captain."

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[173] T.N. His name is very close to *Feind*, which means enemy.

[174] T.N. A reference to a Max and Moritz story by Wilhelm Busch.

And so, my livelihood was assured. With a cheerful heart, I went home the next day with many little presents for the boys to whom I simply could not tell enough stories … about people who had enough corns on their feet for a whole dinner and about flying fish that jumped into the pot of their own free will. I shared a deep bond with Feindt until the day he died. He was an eminently capable leader of the company and he did not regret that he had tied his fate to mine. The company flourished and still today I think with complete satisfaction back to this time in my life that was marked by an embarrassment of riches and by professional success. How happy we were in our home! The future seemed secure. The boys were wonderful little fellows. My wife and I were joined by the common bond of our children and by the sense that, together, we were earning our happiness with hard work. And yet: "waiting by the house's flue, is Hades' servant with his queue!"[175]

Left to right: Theophil with three of his four sons: Kurt-Theophil, Werner and Franz, in 1939, soon before the beginning of World War Two.

[175] T.N. Again, Wilhelm Busch, here Chapter 17, "Triumph of Evil", in *Die Fromme Helene* (Pious Helen). Needless to say, Helene's soul is taken to hell in the story.

Part Nine
A Senseless War

Chapter 26
The Rise of Hitler

Hades' servant with his queue was dirty politics, the manic desire of highflyers to make us all happier than we already are, no matter the cost. We have to remember here that the word "politics" comes from the Greek word "*politeia*,"[176] meaning politeness, which is what the French refer to when they say "*poli*". With mastery, people have succeeded in turning the meaning on its head, and I'm not the only person to have concluded that politics is the lowest, nastiest thing there is and that it corrupts the character.

Our old imperial state had fallen apart. The Weimar Republic tried in vain to become its successor but found no sympathy among the people. Instead there were savage street battles at any occasion between the rightists and the leftists. Both parties organized large marches and, as a rule, people were left dead. Adolf Hitler with his vulgar gift as an orator incited the masses. His program was so seductive: It was not the party book that was to decide matters but capability. It was not party ministers who would make a difference but specialized ministers with salaries that could not be higher than 1000 marks. A vote of confidence for his government would be held every year. And so, with his strong national orientation and his seductive economic program, everyone followed him like the pied piper—all the more as the victorious powers, completely misjudging the German character, made one mistake after another with respect to how Germany was treated, effectively disappointing and antagonizing every German, no matter what his politics.

And so, during the final days of the Reichspräsident von Hindenburg, the Nazi party assumed power. The black, red and gold flags disappeared and all windows now showed the precious black, red and white colours.[177] This served to bring in all the supporters of tradition, down to the simple soldier who had fought under these colours at the front years ago, winning many a victory. The mood and the attitude among the broad masses of the good German people may be gauged from the headlines of *Nachrichten des*

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[176] T.N. It actually goes back to the idea of the polis and to the term politiká (Πολιτικά), which translates as "affairs of the cities".

[177] C.D. Here, Gautier means that the flag of the Weimar Republic was replaced by the old Imperial Flag of Germany, with its simple three stripes of black, red and white, to which Gautier himself would have felt great loyalty.

Reichsverbandes der höheren Verwaltungsbeamten des Reiches und der Länder e.V.,[178] issue no. 4, April 13, 1933:

> *"The popular uprising*[179] *has been most warmly welcomed by all higher officials—but by no other professional group as warmly and with such liberated hearts as by the administrative officials, for they have suffered the most since November 9, 1918. Without any independence and protection from dismissal, without being able, like the technical officials, to ward off non-objective interventions, they were bound by instructions and, as organs of the sovereign administration, were often forced to cooperate in state acts which went against their convictions and which they not infrequently recognized as being contrary to the true good of the state and the people. The pressure of parliamentary party rule with all its questionable manifestations weighed most heavily on them. We had to watch defenselessly as the people of the Great King of the Civil Servants were increasingly torn to shreds, as corruption spread with impunity and as the administration lost the understanding and trust of the population. In spite of all the pressure exerted on them, however, by far the largest part of the administration has retained the old Prussian civil servant spirit and its national mindset. They can place themselves with full conviction in the ranks of the national comrades who see in the events of March 21, 1933,*[180] *the dawn of a better time for the German people, joyfully welcoming it, and perhaps it is precisely as a result of their bitter experiences that the administrative officials will be able to make a particularly valuable contribution to national reconstruction."*

What deep-seated ethics can be seen in this avowal, and how bitter was the disappointment that followed. But it is also a great mistake to now go and punish—through ostracism, persecution and defamation—the German intelligentsia following the collapse—people who thought like this and followed the rabble-rouser out of idealism. This makes for a bad foundation for all of Europe.

Following the seizure of power, the rearmament soon began. First, old soldiers were conscripted and new recruits were trained. And so, it was soon my turn. I was in the middle of a very large order for Minimax. More than thirty oil tankships that belonged to Sir Detering[181] were meant to be equipped with stationary fire

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[178] T.N. "News Bulletin of the Reich Association of Higher Administrative Officials of the Reich and the States"

[179] T.N. The term "nationale Erhebung" was used as a euphemism for the Nazi seizure of power.

[180] C.D. March 21, 1933 was Potsdam Day, a ceremony for the reopening of the Reichstag after it was set on fire. Coming shortly after the German election, it was used as a propaganda ceremony to promote Hitler and his message of German strength and unity.

[181] T.N. He is likely referring to the Dutch oil magnate Henri Deterding.

extinguishing systems. And so I was asked to go to London without delay. My question to the director general as to whether I would be allowed to go and try to close the deal was answered as follows: I would be allowed to go anywhere anytime and enter any kind of commitment on behalf of the company as I enjoyed complete trust. And it was hoped that, in future, I would not even ask the question anymore.

Just when I was finalizing my ideas for this trip and doing my last bit of planning, I was conscripted. It was a hard inner struggle for me, trying to decide whether or not I should, at least for the time being, avoid conscription using some pretence. But ultimately, a sense of supposed duty to my homeland prevailed and, in the summer of 1934, I became a soldier for the second time.

At first, this was indeed bitter. Former young subordinates were now my superiors. We old ones felt we were being treated badly and set back. All the while, the unusual work of engaging in clandestine, intensifying armament weighed on our shoulders. Once again, I sat at my desk and made phone calls until far into the night. After one very trying year, I became an inspector for the Armament Inspection in Dresden in the spring of 1936. The *Wehrmacht,* due to the nature of recent history, had the great advantage of counting among its officers those with considerable practical experience in business. And so my task as inspector of armament was as if tailored to suit my training. Working with the excellent Saxon industries was a fascinating experience for me.

The regulations for industrial air-raid protection, which I had to deal with along with a plethora of other problems, seemed impossibly unrealistic to me. They stipulated that workers had to go to the shelters as soon as there was an air-raid warning. But we had factories with many thousands of workers. Moving such crowds to and from their place of work takes not just fractions of hours but full hours. Thus, all an intelligent enemy had to do was to send a few airplanes, which would cause the air-raid alarm to sound, and he could be sure that the armament industry would come to a standstill—without any shelling. It was sheer madness. And so I had a plan devised by my staff and sent trained timekeepers to all the larger factories in my district who would cause all prescribed measures and movements of people to be carried out following a faked air-raid warning. The result was devastating for the armament industry. In some cases, it went down to half of its capacity. I wrote my report and added the demand that, provided that shells were not yet falling, work had to continue and that the works managers needed to be on the factory floor when there was an air-raid alarm to inspire courage in their workers by showing their willingness—so common among soldiers—to share hardship and danger. Essentially, it didn't make a difference in these minutes whether the works managers

were at their desks and on the phones or not; it seemed much more important to me that they would be in the midst of their men. I also added that I myself and my staff would go into the factories in these situations to give palpable proof of the fellowship we "soldiers of the desk" felt with our workers in moments of danger. The report was an utter success. The regulations were amended. Sometime later, I had opportunity to rehearse this and see for myself how right I was in my thinking here.

In a gunpowder factory in Vienna in 1940, in which the production had been modified and modernized, several accidents occurred and people suffered burns. On my instruction, my aide-de-camp brought some fruit for the workers who had been harmed and some tokens of sympathy and got them to explain exactly what had gone on before the accidents. In the afternoon, when he stood in front of my desk and gave me his report, the works management let me know that another accident had occurred. The workers were scared out of their minds and refused to continue production. In my car, I sped along for 45 minutes to the factory and took my youngest son Franz with me so he could look after me if need be, and could send word to the family should something happen to me. Franz happened to arrive at my office when I was about to depart.

To put it in layman's terms, production takes place in such a way that large gunpowder sheets, which look like large sheets of cardboard, continue to be squeezed through contra-rotating rollers on machines called calenders, making them thinner and thinner. During this work, there had been darting flames and they had burned the workers.

When I entered the department—I left our Franzl in the car—the woebegone workers sat with hanging heads, unwilling to work. My personal influence was all that could remedy the situation. First of all, I ordered coffee, sandwiches and baked goods and started to feast, and one by one they all joined me. After a few words of sympathy about those who had been injured, I made a few little jokes, told some stories and calmed the spirits. It was obvious to me that it all more or less came down to nervousness and the resulting operator errors. After all, the new production method had only just been introduced. We talked about all of this calmly, sticking to the facts, came to agree about the causes of these setbacks and also understood how things could be improved. When it was time, I said in a calm voice: "Now let's try this together. I completely trust you and how you perform. Wearing only my light uniform and no protective asbestos suite, I will stand in front of the calenders, and I'm sure you will take great care and nothing will happen to me." And that is what happened. There was no trace of insecurity. Everyone worked professionally and cooperatively. Production ran like clockwork. The log-jam had been overcome and there were no further incidents in the

future. I have to admit that I felt awful during this test of strength, and I do not want to sing my own praises as a hero or martyr. Any foreman working in any of the numerous factories where some danger is part of the process will have experienced something like this in his career. It's just not something you talk about. For me, it was something new; I was not used to it and this success made me very happy.

In these years, around 1933, the Kiel Regatta came to life again. Hotel ships were moored in the Kiel harbour and invitations were sent out around the world. One invitee was a dear friend of mine and admiral of a formerly neutral state. He went with his wife and ten-year-old daughter. The couple was in fact travelling the whole time, going to regattas, dinners, outings and dances. This meant that the daughter was alone a lot of the time. She consoled herself in the ship's library, where she became engrossed in a crime novel. Eventually, it was time to leave again. Her parents were already sitting in the launch that was bound for the station, where they were to catch their train to Paris as the admiral had work to do there for the embassy of his country. When the daughter still hadn't come, I went in the room below deck where she was white-knuckling her novel. I almost had to use force to get her into the boat and I only managed because I promised to tell her what happened on the last forty pages. After the boat had cast off, I read the forty pages. Then I sent the following telegram: "To the embassy in Paris, care of the admiral: Josephine murdered; culprit shot dead in Copenhagen; Marie's skeleton found buried in the basement."

When I slid the piece of paper across the counter to the stolid post office official, he grew nervous. He looked up, his eyes wide, and reached for the telephone. He did this while moving back, out of my reach. "I think you might be calling the police?" I said. His answer was evasive. And then it took me a while to calm him down until he hung up. Then I still had to work on him until he finally sent the telegram. The telegram's success in Paris was as expected. The admiral was faced with a riddle and was tremendously shaken. He sat at the breakfast table, pondering, his face screwed up, with no intake of food. His wife tried in vain to lighten the mood. Finally, the daughter took hold of the telegram that her distraught father had lying on the table next to his plate. There was a cry of jubilation! "How nice of him! Now I know how the book ended." Subsequently, a telegram from Paris came in, containing the most terrible curses. When I saw the admiral soon after this, I played it safe by putting a pool table between myself and him because he wanted to throw an inkpot at me.

Being people from the coast, we found ourselves a comfortable apartment on the bank of the Elbe river in Dresden. The ships moved to and fro right before our eyes and it was always a cheerful

sight when, in the summer, the usually overcrowded pleasure steamers sailed past us with happy passengers and music playing. We once spent a two-week holiday at Königstein Fortress, where we were given a suite. The Königstein, like the Lilienstein, is an enormous piece of rock, cast by nature like a die into the otherwise flat landscape. In the olden days, the Königstein was a nearly impregnable fortress. You enter the courtyard through a heavy entrance gate secured with massive doors, and from there you climb up the stairs to the quarters for the personnel near the massive rampart. There you have a magnificent long view of the beautiful land of Saxony. We went on many hikes, starting from the castle, and going as far as the romantic *Teufelsschlucht* gorge and the wonderful outdoor baths.

Our eldest, Werner, had by then spread his wings. He had become a naval pilot and, after one year of pilot training, he was going with the naval cadettes who were circumnavigating Africa on the training ship *Emden*. Our second oldest, Kurt-Theo, was also going to leave in a matter of six months and join the navy. Because he had a festering wound on his foot, he had to stay behind while we hiked, a wistful expression in his eyes. What I wouldn't give to see him like that again.

In the winter, the Ore Mountains offered good opportunities for winter sports. Living in the middle of the most gorgeous landscape, there was a chief forester to whom we were related and whose beautiful house served as a pleasant headquarters.

My duties took me all across the country. On one of my first trips in 1936, I went to Leipzig and its large industries, where I introduced myself to the mayor, Dr. Karl Goerdeler.[182] This visit would prove significant for the next years of my life. Sitting in front of his desk, I saw a strong, well-proportioned man in his prime, with a bold aquiline nose and sparkling eyes that spoke. In what was only a brief conversation, we found common ground in the shared concern for our state. We were absolutely clear in our minds about the dangerous course the Reich was taking, a government that had by now replaced our old black, white and red flag by the red flag with the swastika. We were also convinced that a war, which those in command were obviously going for, would be lost before it started because the enormous military potential of the Anglo-Saxons would squeeze us against the wall. If we had known back then that not only the Anglo-Saxons would be our opponents but also Russia, our worries would have been even more torturous.

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[182] C.D. Goerdeler was a significant opponent of the Nazi regime, specifically anti-Jewish policies and the Holocaust. He was ready to assume the role of Chancellor of the new government, had the plot to kill Hitler succeeded. He was executed by hanging on February 2, 1945, but not before he gave the Gestapo the names of many of his co-conspirators.

My talks about the armament situation that I had to deliver in regular intervals to Colonel O. and the commanding general in Dresden sounded more and more like an urgent petition to maintain peace by all possible means. Olbricht, later General of the Infantry and Chief of Staff of the Reserves, fought for his convictions and paid for them with his life. He was executed by a firing squad in the courtyard of the office building on Bendlerstraße the night Count Staufenberg failed to assassinate Hitler.[183] I think of this decent and chivalric comrade with the most heartfelt affection. He was an officer and patriot of the kind the nation would envision as a role model!

Before me I have a letter from the former Austrian minister Dr. Guido Jakoncig, dated February 18, 1948, in Innsbruck, Anichstraße 18. He writes, among other things: "I cannot even say how happy I would be if I could work with you again. And you may be assured that I am always available, should it become necessary, to shed light on your activities in Vienna and your efforts to end the war."

He was referring to the following event: On my behalf, my friend the engineer Michael Derfler from Vienna travelled to Zagreb and Belgrade before the war in Yugoslavia broke out. He was to have confidential meetings there with both Maček, the Croat leader of the farmers,[184] and the prince regent Paul. The latter asked him to come out to his country estate, where they spent hours discussing the situation. Macek had been friends with Derfler for years. Both stated that they were committed to helping bring about a general peace agreement as soon as possible, and both repeatedly said that they had reason to hope their efforts would be successful. Derfler took the next train to Leipzig to give Dr. Goerdeler his report. When G. went to the Foreign Office, he did not succeed with these promising efforts. They gave him the cold shoulder, and we could be glad that there were no repercussions for us.

Ambassador von Hassel,[185] too, paid me a visit now and then when he travelled to and from Italy, and I will always remember an office bowling night in Vienna which he joined in high spirits. On

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[183] C.D. On July 20, 1944, Claus von Stauffenberg attempted to kill Hitler with a bomb. This was the culmination of a long-term plot involving many government and military officials and originating as early as 1933. One of the conspirators, Hans Bernd Gisevius, detailed the plot in his memoir, *To the Bitter End*, which was first published in 1946.

[184] C.D. Vlado Maček was the leader of the Croation Peasant Party who opposed the Serbian domination of the Yugoslavian Government. Twice imprisoned for his resistance to King Alexander, he eventually led his party to an overwhelming parliamentary victory under the Regency of Prince Paul in 1935 and again in 1939 and served as Deputy Prime Minister in the Yugoslav government from 1939 to 1941.

[185] T.N. This must be Ulrich von Hassell, who was executed in the aftermath of the failed 20 July plot.

page 199 of his diary "The Other Germany,"[186] he mentions me in a line that aptly characterizes me: "Much more sharply, of course, General Gautier." This referred to his conversation with the *Gauleiter*[187] named Jury about the beginning of the war with Yugoslavia, which the latter saw as nothing more than a slip-up.

Summoned in a telephone call to my Dresden office, I went to Berlin in the spring of 1937, where I was told that I would be given time off to spend several months in Berlin's Hildebrandstraße, where I would be "loaned out" to the *Mitteleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag*.[188] I was to gain in-depth knowledge about all issues concerning the South-East. This posting became very interesting. I was involved in large-scale buying of materials for the heavy industry; in the founding of mines, such as the Gesellschaft Granitoid in Bulgaria; in the exertion of influence regarding the rich copper deposits of the Mines de Bor in Yugoslavia; and in the founding of state-of-the-art agricultural estates and teaching facilities in the Balkans. Wherever you looked, there was something interesting to be found, and once again I was able to put to use the strange training and the diverse experience that life had given me.

The head of the economic office, Dr. Max Hahn, was a genius. He breathed music and had been an excellent violinist in his youth. The First World War had cost him an arm, and that spelled the end of his violin playing. But I believe that the music he always heard inside his head continued to enliven him because he was always in a happy state of mind and full of energy. He became a very valuable teacher to me, though he has long since died.

Like all economists, he was able to see the collapse coming in the wake of a war. As if bewitched by the gaze of a snake, our poor country—despite almost the entire intelligentsia knowing better—lurched into this war that has caused us to teeter at the brink of an abyss ever since.

Thinking back to that time, all I can say is that it was full of tension and turmoil. The Hitler salute became firmly established, that is, no one dared to say their opinion openly anymore. You felt watched all the time. When you were walking in the street with someone, you always looked left and right and behind you before you said anything. Naturally, the general economic performance increased under the centralized leadership, and it was almost a miracle how much our strengths increased in this struggle against the whole

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[186] T.N. Published in English in 2011 as *The Ulrich Von Hassell Diaries, 1938-1944: The Story of the Forces Against Hitler Inside Germany.*

[187] T.N. Head of an administrative district during the Nazi period

[188] T.N. An economic advocacy group that worked toward economic control of the Central European market as well as indirect political dominance of the region.

world. This would be the case in any totalitarian system, yet Churchill was right when he spoke about "the worm in the apple."

The following brief incident made it alarmingly clear to me what the rest of the world thought about us and our leadership. I had been invited to a dinner in one of the palatial villas in Wannsee. Across from me sat a French scholar who entertained the whole table with his *bon mots*, delivered in very broken German. After the dinner, he sidled up to a group of ladies, and I soon heard explosive laughter coming from that direction. He had said the following: "Tell me, ladies, am I pronouncing these difficult German words correctly when I say: *Herr Gering, Herr Gebell?* And, my ladies, how do you say it correctly in German: *Der liebe Ley* or *die Liebelei?*[189]

My family and I found ourselves a nice house at a little lake, the Stölpchensee, two minutes from the golf course in Wannsee. Our two youngest, Georg and Franzl, spent their free time there, and quite often we would go again in the evening and play a family foursome. How we all miss this now that this recreation is no more.

Kurt Theo, our second oldest, had by now moved on to the navy after completing his labour service locally in Dresden. He had completed a tour around South America on the *Schlesien*. When the ship was back in port in Wilhelmshaven in 1938, I went to fetch him and he had a few nice days of vacation in our little house. He would not have many more opportunities for this and the memory of these few hours of happiness is what one clings to.

Werner, our eldest, was completing his navy training during those years. After he had finished with the naval officer commissioning exam, he switched to flying once and for all—a source of constant worry for us. The rapport between the brothers was exemplary, and Mo and I were proud whenever we could gather all four of them together and show ourselves with this household guard of honour. They were our capital. Yet, we were denied an absolute feeling of happiness. You could already smell the coming war. Food was scarce. In front of the stores there were often lines of eager ustomers.

Göring hurled his provocative words about guns versus butter at the world![190]

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[189] T.N. He is poking fun at the two central Nazi politicians (Herrmann) Göring and (Robert) Ley, likening their names to words that are unflattering or comical. "Herr Gebell" would mean "Mr. Dogbark," while "Liebelei" means "flirtation," and sound almost like "der liebe Ley," meaning "Dear Ley."

[190] T.N. This was a well-known phrase from Goebbels and Göring. "Butter" represented non-security goods that increase social welfare, such as schools, hospitals, parks, and roads. "Guns" referred to security goods such as personnel—both troops and civilian support staff—as well as military equipment like weapons, ships, or tanks.

Theophil wrote: "On October 28, 1939, the whole family got together one last time," when this photograph was taken. Proud parents Elsbeth and Theophil Gautier, seated lower left, smile with their four sons in the face of impending tragedies. Less than four months later Kurt-Theophil, standing upper left, was dead from drowning when his navy ship sank. Soon afterwards, Werner, a navy flyer, seated lower right, was captured by the British and sent to Canada as a prisoner of war for five long years. In late 1943, Georg, standing upper center, was captured with his submarine crew in the Mediterranean Sea and sent to Spain as a prisoner of war. In April 1945, weeks before the war ended, Franz, standing upper right, was killed by machine-gun fire in northern Italy.

Theophil in his General's uniform as Armaments Inspector in Vienna during World War Two, being greeted by his driver, Gunther, who is bowing, and by Heinrich Dreyer, far right.

Theophil inspecting a military vehicle in Vienna.

Chapter 27
Austria and a Terrible Sacrifice

And so, in the spring of 1938, Austria was invaded.[191] Because of my specialized training in Southeast European affairs—which I had received over the past six months in the *Mitteleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag*—and because of the knowledge I had acquired about numerous figures in this context, I was made Armament Inspector in Vienna. My heart immediately began to beat in three-four time. Here was a task that suited me particularly well: I would be going to the city of music, art and gracefulness, with its charming inhabitants, and would have the possibility of promoting Germany and helping Austrians feel at home in the German Reich. In addition, there was the great industrial task, experiencing and influencing the creation of a new industry. In the years that followed, tremendous sums were invested in these newly established companies. All areas of the economy saw an exceptional stimulation and expansion. I will only mention the oil fields in Zistersdorf. Today, they have become a bone of contention in big politics, due to a production increase.The warmth with which I was received in Austria would be hard to top. I never felt like a foreigner there but instead always had the sound and reassuring sense that I was at home. We found a comfortable home in Hietzing, at the address Nothartgasse 5. For eight years, this house harboured us and we experienced both profound happiness and bitter pain there.

The small garden produced a prodigious bounty of fruit and still had room for comfortable seating, a ping-pong table and later the bomb shelter that would protect us and our neighbours over the course of many hours at the end of the war. Unfortunately, it had been built into the water table and therefore slowly filled with water during the night. In the morning, when my private secretary Fräulein Stapenhorst arrived, she put on her rubber boots and then began emptying the shelter using a pump and buckets. This had to be done by 10 a.m., which was when the alarm sounded and the shelter became populated.

As soon as our neighbour, Grandmother Hanascheck, with her children and grandchildren, had settled in, she would take a wax candle out of her pocket, stick it to the wall of the shelter, light it, fold her hands, and then her mouth would move in silent prayer,

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[191] C.D. The Anschluss, an annexation of Austria on March 12, 1938, was Hitler's first act of territorial aggression, and an express violation of the Treaty of Versailles, which forbade the unification of Austria and Germany. However, many Germans and Austrians supported the policy and no punishment was forthcoming from other European states for this action.

becoming louder at times as we began to hear the whistling of dropping bombs and knew that the strikes were close. The children screamed and the adults were nervous; in short, time spent in a bomb shelter is something dreadful. Mo and Marga Stapenhorst stayed in the house on principle. Mo cooked calmly, and Marga Stapenhorst, standing by the window and watching, hastily ate her food ration that she had brought with her, following her maxim: *You've got what you've got.* One time, she devoured half a layer cake in this fashion, to save it from destruction, and was happy when she had completed the task successfully. Under normal circumstances, she would have earned herself a medal. Yet, I was the one to receive one, namely from one of the southeastern countries. It went around my neck, and then there was also a star to be pinned to my chest, accompanied by a document written in old-fashioned calligraphy, stating that I am a *Vitez,* that is a hero.

In the city centre (this was 1938), I found a suitable large building to house my office. The small but necessary architectural modifications were quickly completed and then I got to work, full steam ahead. I remember my first official deed. This was the awarding of the first contracts, which were worth ten million marks. For this purpose, I called in the company managers and gave a little speech about the fact that we now belonged together and were pulling on the same rope. I promised them that I would champion the interests of my new home as if they were my own and asked them to come to me with any worries and to talk to me. This created such a friendly atmosphere and brought all our hearts so close together that I was left speechless at times and likely shook everyone to the core. Oh, if only it could have remained that way, if only hubris had not destroyed everything.

On my trip from Berlin to Vienna, I had boarded a ship in Linz which carried Göring and his staff. When we approached the Donaulende, I went to the dark foreship. Before me, the lights of the large city that was to be our home flickered in luminescent chains. There were mountains on both sides of the waterway, the Leopoldsberg and the Bisamberg. The former had been the starting point for the military action that had led to the German liberation of Vienna[192] from the Turkish siege. The Turks at the time had been helped by French sappers[193] and pioneers who had managed to bring the siege closer and closer to the city. Thinking these thoughts, I

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[192] C.D. Here, Gautier seems to be referring to freeing Vienna from the Ottoman Empire in 1683, an event that, with his extensive knowledge of military history would naturally occur to him when visiting this location.

[193] C.D. Sappers are military engineers responsible for tasks such as building and repairing roads and bridges, or digging covered trenches to approach areas under siege.

heard voices next to me. An older gentleman, a *Hofrat,*[194] as I learned later, addressed me politely. A few more gentlemen came to watch the berthing maneuver, just as I was doing. Laughing, the old gentleman told the following story: "In a hard winter several years ago, a lot of ice was drifting on the Danube. One morning, a harbour watchman had called me in my office, saying, 'Herr Hofrat, Herr Hofrat, the ice has built up so much that the Danube is flowing uphill. There will be flooding. What should I do?' So I answered, 'Take a close look. You won't see this kind of thing again anytime soon!'"

He added that there was, after all, no remedy for this. Everyone standing nearby laughed, myself included, because this way of conducting one's business was foreign to me as a Prussian. And here came the conclusion. The old civil servant turned to me again and said: "You Prussians, of course, would have done it differently. You would have sent a battalion of pioneers to dynamite the ice jam. Before long, it would have backed up again. There was just no point at all. But you always want solutions that are 100 percent and are hell-bent on getting your way. We Austrians have always been content with 80 percent and have fared quite well with that. Perhaps you'll do it like us one day."

These words left a deep impression on me at the time. Subsequently, I adjusted my behaviour and indeed got along very well during my eight years in Vienna. In general, the southeastern region is full of wisdoms that we northern Germans would do well to observe. Two sayings, which I heard quite a few times, seem especially worth taking to heart: *The dog barks, the caravan keeps moving along*. And: *Why are you yelling? Chances are, it means you're in the wrong.*

Work increased by the day. To develop an informed opinion about things, I had to drive around a fair bit in my car because I didn't know the lay of the land. And I had to get to know people and above all acquaint myself with the factory managers. This was nice in the summer but in the cold winter it was tough. How often we had to dig out our car when it was stuck in the snow, and how cold we were! Yet enchanting nature made up for so much. The view from the Semmering Pass, across the wide-open land and looking up at the snow-capped peaks all around, is like a gift from God. At the foot of the Semmering, Frau von Mandl lived on a magnificent property. She was the widow of my father-in-law's former partner in China and was a sophisticated older lady with whom we soon struck up a good friendship. As a wedding gift, she had given us beautiful Chinese lamps.

One day, when I was working in my office, my trusty secretary Frau Hartmann came in, visibly excited, and told me that Herr

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[194] T.N. Honorary title conferred on a senior civil servant.

Moser was asking when I could see him. "Who is Herr Moser?" I asked. "Well, the film actor," she said.[195] Everyone in the inspection office was looking forward to this visit. Photographers and film people were waiting for him at the entrance and he was taken to see me with a great deal of ceremony. When the door opened, he stood there anxiously and stammered a few words. I tried to double up my kindness and asked him to come and have a seat. When he still hesitated, I got up and asked in the gentlest of voices why aren't you taking a seat or coming closer? To this the rascal replied, "I was so afraid. I assumed because you are a Prussian that you would speak in a loud voice and command me to state my purpose. But here you are being so friendly; it's kind of thrown me off!"

We shared a good laugh. Then we had a splendid conversation and I was even able to grant him the wish he had in mind. I enjoy the memory of this fabulous man who, like many film people, I believe, did not have the easiest life. We had friends[196] in common, but I had lost their address due to the long isolation from other countries. We composed a few lines for those friends together and then he took his leave.

This encounter, like several others that followed later, was important and valuable for me. I thought deeply about the reasons why we Prussians were the object of such criticism. The main thing that is held against us is our uncommonly curt and seemingly brusque manner. Personally, I took the criticism to heart and attempted to correct this blemish.

This was also the time when the first shadow fell on the happiness of our family. Our eldest son, Werner, got into a serious accident driving his private car. At first it looked like he would not recover from it. Ultimately, this situation turned into a hospital stay of almost a year.[197] I managed to get him into the convalescent home on the Semmering, where he was very well looked after. From his bed, he looked out into the mountains, and sitting on his balcony, he was able to recover slowly and peacefully. The attending nurse in charge had an eye on the handsome young man.

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[195] C.D. Hans Moser was an Austrian actor who mainly played in comedy roles. He was particularly associated with the genre of the *Wiener Film,* an Austrian film genre consisting of a combination of comedy, romance and melodrama in a historical setting, mostly the Vienna of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

[196] T.N. A name in the margin of manuscript page 218 is cut off, and the fragment is too small for us to wager a guess.

[197] C.D. To me, this perfectly illustrates my father's reticence to speak of his life before coming to Canada. This traumatic accident, and the almost yearlong stay in hospital that followed, was never mentioned to me.

We were glad to have Werner close by and to be able to look after him occasionally. After long months, the famous heart specialist Dr. Wenckebach from Vienna[198] fixed up our boy, who was beginning to lose confidence in himself and was suffering from vertigo. Wenckebach had been in the Dutch East Indies for a long time. He once took home a whole lot of human hearts in soldered canisters. The problems he had with customs because of that, as well as the difficulties with the police, were like a farce. Goods such as those he was carrying were not listed in any customs catalogue, and the police, too, did not know what to do. It was embarrassing when one of the canisters stored on the train's luggage rack sprang a leak and the preserving alcohol dripped all over the passengers.

When, at the beginning of our time in Vienna, we had all of our sons visiting, we went on a trip up the Kahleberg mountain. The sunny terrace up there affords an expansive view into the distance, to the vineyards along the Danube. All eyes were on me, the general, with his handsome guard and the happy mother. We consumed mountains of cake and whipped cream—all things that were still available there. At the end, a very sweet waitress wearing a dirndl came with a tray full of glasses with water. The water in Vienna is a special treat. It is piped in from the Semmering. After a sip of this refreshing drink, I wanted to show that I was affable, looked at the young girl with trusting eyes and told her: "Young lass, the water really is the loveliest thing there is here in Austria!" A shadow moved across her face and, deeply disappointed, she answered: "Nonsense! Do you really mean to tell me that? I can tell you are a Prussian!" My guard had a great time seeing their father knocked back like this. (The misunderstanding happened because we North Germans often mistakenly use the word "lovely" to mean "good" or "delicious," which an Austrian would never do. So, in this respect, Austrians speak a more correct German.)

Another nice little anecdote goes back to my visit at a newly founded engine works that produced for the air force. All non-local members of the staff were housed in newly constructed barracks. Barracks generally constituted the architectural style of the time, which led to the jocular expression "Hitler's Baraque Style." Workers from the southeastern countries predominated, some of whom had grown up in very primitive circumstances. As in any barracks, a duty officer was in charge of the wake-up call, getting people up and breakfasted, and maintaining work hours. One morning, the officer is doing his rounds in the bathrooms with WCs, and he notices a

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[198] C.D. Karel Frederik Wenckebach was a Dutch anatomist who became a professor of medicine at the University of Vienna. He is primarily remembered for his work in cardiology involving the treatment of paroxysmal atrial fibrillation.

worker kneeling in front of a toilet bowl, washing himself with gusto. Appalled, the officer asks what he is doing there, to which the man answers, "I've never washed myself as comfortably as this. When the water is dirty, all I have to do is flush to get more clean water. You Germans are simply very clever."

Austria is not only the land of dumplings but also the land of hunting. Our new friends generously invited us to come along. For the first time in our lives, we shot chamois, capercaillie, deer and wild boar. During a fruitless effort to hunt for deer one winter, our Franzl wrote the following verse into the guestbook of the host of the hunt, Herr Maresch:[199]

If you want to shoot a deer,	*Willst Du an Hirschen schiassn,*
You shouldn't go to Maresch.	*Darfst nicht zu Maresch fahrn.*
You'll just get a cold ear,	*Dort kriagst Du kalte Fiassn*
And shoot a pile of rubbish.	*Und schissest einen Schmarrn.*

We soon enjoyed the warm friendship of this magnificent man and his family, which grew all the warmer when we began to play golf together. None of us will ever forget his beautiful property, the Hollenburg.[200] In the nearby Karawank Mountains, Werner and Franzl shot their first chamois. One morning, before we set out to hunt, I was stretching my legs in the castle's picture-perfect inner court, enjoying the morning sun and the interesting inscription on some of the old stones. One inscription caught my eye; it was on an erratic gravestone that had somehow come to the Hollenburg and had been built into the wall. The Latin words said more or less: "Knight Caecilius dedicated this stone to himself and his seventh wife" (*libavit sibique septimae conjugi*). Across from the castle lay the Loibl Pass, which the legions had crossed on their way to and from Rome. And this is also where the milestones came from that were set into the wall next to the gravestone. In my mind's eye, I could see the *miles gloriosus*[201] marching up, led by his *eques,*[202] and then came the attacks by the local mountain people, and the poor women and their retinue were killed and scattered to the winds. Eager to live life to the fullest, the knight, with chains attesting to his bravery clanking on his armour, had taken another wife, and then another one. Finally, when he had married his seventh, the devil came for both

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[199] C.D. Presumably Ferdinand Maresch, the owner before World War Two of a prosperous ceramic factory in the Sudentenland.

[200] C.D. Schloss Hollenburg is a medieval castle located near Köttmannsdorf in Carinthia, Austria. Before Marsch it was owned by the ultra-wealthy Wittgenstein family of Austrian steel and munitions magnates whose members included the famous Austro-British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein,

[201] T.N. Glorious soldier

[202] T.N. Knight

her and him. Or was this knight a kind of Bluebeard and had "gone through" one wife after another? If only this stone could speak!

Other dear friends were the family of *Reichsfreiherr*[203] Rainer von Harbach. They owned an enormous property at the border of Czechia and Slovakia. We took turns hunting and riding. In the evenings, we drank and laughed for hours. Baroness Edel was a great comic storyteller. We hoped to see this magnificent woman and her daughter Rosemarie many more times. In the war they lost everything. The husband[204] is now going to South America to search for new ways to make a living.

During this busy time, the day came when we had to sacrifice our beloved second-oldest son Kurt-Theo to this most senseless war of all. After the campaign in Poland, he came back on vacation. We all went to the Semmering, where Werner was still in the hospital. On October 28, 1939, the whole family got together one last time. Fully conscious that the time of losses was now approaching, we parents enjoyed this day to the fullest. A film that we have preserved to this day vividly shows this last golden day, if we can bear to watch it. How this son was attached to me! He simply idolized me. Nothing can recompense for this loss of love. If our leaders had had sons at the front themselves, who knows, they might have acted very differently. Kurt-Theo visited again for a few short days at Christmas. Then we had our final good-bye. I can still see my beloved son get into the sleeper car that would take him up to the coast via Berlin. Quickly, at the last moment before the train started moving, I climbed up onto the car behind him and gazed after him. He turned, as if pulled by a magic force, and waved at me, laughing. Then I had to get off as quickly as I could. This is my last memory of him. Seven weeks later, in late February, that fateful letter written by his superior landed on my desk, announcing his death in battle on February 22, 1940. We were almost out of our minds with pain. And then we received letters from comrades and subordinates, so full of respect and love for our boy. His vessel, the destroyer *Leberecht Maas,* had sunk after receiving two hits. Our son had kept his sunny smile to the last and had been a comfort to those around him. At the end, when they were short of life jackets, he gave his up so that an ordinary seaman could have it. Thus, he crossed over as an exemplary soldier and Christian. Now he awaits us in the beyond, having gone ahead of us.

In my agony, I composed a little fairy tale, which I am copying down here. It is addressed to little Elisabeth Brockhaus, who

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[203] T.N. A noble title dating to the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation

[204] C.D. Probably Viktor Ritter von Rainer zu Harbach, whose wife was Carmen Edle Suplicy. Viktor and Edle moved to Brazil at the end of World War Two. Source: Geni.com.

warmed my heart with her overflowing love during a visit at her parents' home:

My dearest little friend!

As I walked through the streets of our beautiful city of Vienna and thought of all the dear people I've come to know here and elsewhere in the course of my sixty-one years, your face was among those that came to mind, and on my cheeks burned the kisses you recently gave me. It was clear to me that I owed you something for them. And so I found this little leather purse that will hopefully bring you joy. It was made locally and is meant to be a greeting from the home city of your mother. Perhaps you can use it for your handkerchief or other sundries a young lady likes to carry with her.

Now I would like to say that should you ever have worries in the evening, or are chased by grey ghosts, or if you have behaved as you otherwise would not have as a good girl, or if ever you are plagued by evil spirits, then put them and the grey ghosts into the purse, close it tightly and lay down your head to sleep. Then you will hear how they bluster about and squabble in there. They will giggle and declare how bad people are, and how, for their part, they always plague people and move them to say and do evil things.

You will hear them repeat a song from the earliest days of humanity: "Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring/Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly goddess, sing!/That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign/The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain;/Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore,/Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore."[205] "Do you not see," an evil spirit will say, "this is the nature of humans; they are cruel murderers."

And then another laughs quietly to himself, whispering, "Oh I know a different story, one of two brothers, one called Cain and the other Abel. They got into a fight and the evil brother Cain struck his poor brother dead."

"Yes but," calls a third, "that's nothing. I was in the Odenwald mountains when, on a beautiful spring day, the hero Sigurd drank from a spring while hunting and his comrade Hagen drove his spear between Sigurd's shoulder blades from behind."

And then they will scream chaotically that all that is nothing: today people use mechanized weapons and kill each other by the thousands and ten thousands all in one go. "That's just the way it is —people are just bad and evil!" And when you hear that you will be very sad and will long to believe in something beautiful and good and then you will say, "How strange! People actually do desire light, warmth and beauty, and the banner under which they live and move forward is a sun wheel or even the rising sun. Another very powerful people borrowed its standard from the endless firmament and gathers under the star-spangled banner; and so must not there be something else besides the bad, the dark, and the mean?"

[205] T.N. First lines of Homer's *Iliad*, translated by Alexander Pope

And when you have these thoughts as you fall asleep, then it will suddenly become light around you and you will behold God in His unfathomable clarity and all around in glorious transfiguration will be millions of young men gathering round His throne. They are the ones who have given their lives in battle and war, among them our dear son. God will converse with them and ask them what they have gone through. Each one will give an account and our son will tell the following story:

"We were travelling on an ice-cold winter night in the vast sea and as the ice floes crashed against our hull and all around us it was black and dark and cruel, we struck a mine. One of our engines died but the other was still going. I jumped to the upper deck from the command bridge where I was on duty and there I met my commander, who ordered me to use the backup rudder and set a course for the homeland in the hope of reaching it. Then I went into the back-most compartment with several brave sailors, used the hand rudder, and commenced to cheerfully speak to my men. We got our ship moving in the opposite direction, but just then a second mine struck us and now the end was nigh.

One after another, I moved my men up the narrow stairs which became increasingly vertical. I was the last in line, the water rising up to my neck, but I got out. Then I found life jackets and tied them on to each of my men and had them jump overboard one by one. For me there was no life jacket left as I was compelled to give them to my men first. Almost all of them were saved. And then I jumped overboard, coming to you, God, through knowledge of life and death, and now I stand before your throne like all the others."

Then God asked, "Why did you do that?" To which our son answered, "Because I am ready to sacrifice myself for an ideal, because I am a soldier and as such I live to fulfill my duty to the end, and in this way to be an example." At this, the eyes of all the young men around him lit up, because their fate, because that which they had gone through, because their sacrifice, was the same. A tear ran down God's cheek and He said, "Two thousand years ago, my son did not die on the cross in vain." And God asked our boy, "Do you have a wish?" A murmur went through the millions of young men and our son answered: "All of us have parents, siblings, relatives and friends. Many of them are standing on the front lines, just as we stood there. Their mothers, their fathers, their sisters, their brothers and all the others are worried about them. People have forgotten how to laugh. Their joyless existence is antagonized by worry and sorrow. Oh, redeem them from this evil and the torments, believe that they are chastened and bless humanity with peace." And God waved over one of his angels and ordered him to fly down to Earth and chase away the grey and evil spirits and to bring people the peace they so ardently desire. And when the angel arrived on Earth, he knocked on every window and roused the good in mankind and sang in a cheerful voice: "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace and good will towards men."

At this very moment, you will open your eyes and be in good spirits—cheerful and happy. And when you open the small leather purse, all the evil spirits will fly away. And if you make sure to take good care of yourself, they'll never return.

Do you see, my little friend, these are all the thoughts I had as I wrapped up this small leather purse, and now I hope that this little story will always remind you of me, just as I will never forget you. Give your dear parents and siblings my heartfelt greetings. I am, as always, your loyal friend.

Writing down these words about something that was deeply troubling me brought me true relief. And so, shortly afterwards, I picked up the pen once more and wrote another story for little Elisabeth, which I copy here as well:

Fulfilment
By an old soldier

Time and again, I engross myself in your picture and brood over the question of why your young, twenty-year-long life had to be extinguished so suddenly, why your eyes will never again seek mine, why your voice will never again reach my ear. I have been tormented by these questions for two years now. I am filled with an insatiable longing and an agonizing restlessness. But redemption has come through the love of a child.

I can still see you, little Elisabeth, coming in the door and scrutinizing me with your bright eyes, surrounded by your parents and older siblings. Then you came to me with some hesitation and found more courage when I showed you that you only had nine fingers while I had a total of ten on my hands. In an exuberance of emotions, you suddenly threw your arms around my neck and sat on my lap and whispered your little French verse, "La petite hirondelle," into my ear. Then you slid over to the piano bench and played Edvard Grieg's Elves' Dance and opened up your dear little soul to me.

When I had to move on hours later, both of us found the parting difficult. You clung to my neck and didn't want to let go and your kisses burned on my cheek. In the end you took a small bouquet of violets from your little hat and stuck it in the pin of one of my medals, affixing it to me, your first knight. I've kept this little bouquet for months now and it reminds me of that happy hour. Do you know, little Elisabeth, that you have restored my balance and built a bridge to my fallen son? Now, he is close to me once again with his devoted, unfettered and merry laughter, just as when he spent his days among us, his parents and siblings. Now, I am no longer haunted by the image of his difficult death, but instead I have the certainty that his life with all his willingness to sacrifice reached fulfillment, and this is a tie that reconnects me to him with the force of life. You too, my boy, sat in my lap and threw your arms around me and opened your heart to me.

How often the gaggle of you four dear boys would come home in the evening, windswept, healthy, and dishevelled. Your mud-

encrusted shoes would be taken off and replaced with new ones, you'd clean yourselves up, and then the four of you would be lying by the crackling fireplace. There would also be a little corner for the fifth in your group, loyal Packean, your pinscher with his clever eyes and a face that seemed to talk. And then you would eat endless slices of buttered bread and drink innumerable glasses of milk.

You had so much to tell about what had happened during the day. Then came the moment you had all been waiting for. Four sets of eyes would look at me beseechingly. You, my boy, would sit down on my knee, full of trust, contentment and expectation. Was it not then that I called you my dear teddy bear? After all, when you were nestled against me like that and I stroked your blond mane, you positively growled with contentment, as if someone were petting your fur. "Tell us father, tell us about the war!"

That was the hour in which your hearts belonged to me and we were one. Precious hours! Anyone who has to do without is a beggar. And so I would rifle through my memories and tell you about the Battle of Jutland, about going through minefields, through the English Channel and along the Flemish coast.

One of the stories that I had to repeat so many times, ended this way:

Exhausted, with salt and funnel smoke in our faces, after a successful battle, we arrived in the Zeebrugge harbour, having sunk four enemy destroyers, a steamer and many smaller vessels, having taken prisoners whom we pulled out of the water, and having not lost a single one of our vessels. Sleep o sleep is a mercy when you are as tired as us, and you bump into all kinds of things, hardly able to find the bed. The next morning, I awoke in a tastefully furnished, modern hotel, feeling refreshed and strong. With a rare feeling of pleasure, I had a look at the beautiful marble fireplace with its charming mantel clock and the inviting furnishings, including a fine rug. My eyes fell on an engraving on the opposite wall and I read: 'Leopold Premier, Roi des Belges.' A kind, intelligent face, an antiquated uniform whose only decoration, affixed on the left side of his coat, beneath a large star medal, was the First Class Iron Cross of 1813.

What a mad world it was that made us grandchildren fight against each other! Once more, my senses and my thoughts repeated the events and impressions of the past several days, which left nothing to be desired when it came to variety: I could see the horrifying images of the last night of fighting, the relentless flashing of the artillery over the French mainland, which gave us a feeling of deep uneasiness at first because we had no explanation for it. That filled us with horror as we realized that it was the artillery duel between two enemy lines on land that had been playing out in ever the same manner and without cease for three years now. And I saw how on the wet rocks of a jetty in the morning mist our doctors were working on the rescued enemies, some of whom were severely injured. And I saw the celebration amongst the joyful comrades in the

evening, how, in short speeches, they said the words: 'And if you don't put your life at stake, you will never win it.' And I saw our proud joy over the two First Class Iron Crosses, and the eight Second Class ones, which arrived to be handed to the crew.

Outside, a splendid tolling of bells emanated from the high belfry and I believed I recognized an old hymn. The sun shone and letters from home lay next to me. How beautiful life was! Long live life! Then I strolled to the beautiful old part of the city, saw wonders of gothic architecture, old church paintings by the master Memling, wrinkled old ladies in the beguinage[206] and the sarcophagus of Charles the Bold of Burgundy. In the end, I found myself in the Church of Our Lady. It was All Souls' Day. The bells tolled all around, and there were the sounds of a silken organ, full-sounding choirs and sweet children's voices coming together to praise God the highest. And the kind smile of Michelangelo's Madonna, bent over the boy in her lap, floated above a crowd on their knees, pushing forward: Et angelus Eius comitetur vobiscum! My thoughts travelled far, to my home, that is to Mother and you, my eldest, you others were still in paradise. And now march off to bed!"

But your eyes burned and you did not leave me alone with your supplications for more. And so I rifled through my memories once more and recited a poem for you that had been formed by the lips of soldiers in Flanders:

Sull ick den Dod op Vlaaderns Fluren starven
Nern an de Yser oder am Konol
Lot Seel und Körper nicht in Slick verdarven;
Ick beed jo: Drägt mi on de See hendohl!

Should I find my death in Flander's fields,
Over at the Yser or at the Channel,
Let my soul and body not decay in mud,
I beg you: carry me down to the sea!

Min Seel, dor set se Seils, dor kunn se fliegen
Südwesten Wind, de nimmt her mit ni Hus!
De frische Bries sall em no'n Elvstand drägen,
Min letzten allerletzten Heimotgruss.

My soul, there it sets sail, there it will fly,
The southwest wind will take it home!
The fresh breeze shall carry it to the bank of the Elbe.
With one last greeting home,

Grovt mi een Grav an Strand, wo Meuven krei
Koppen nach Westen! Ostwarts dat Gesicht;
Ick mut dor hensehn, wo de Sünn opgeiht,
wo an de Elb min scheunes Hamburg liegt.

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[206] T.N. A beguinage is an architectural complex which was created to house beguines: lay religious women who lived in community without taking vows or retiring from the world.

Head to the west! The face pointing east,
Dig me a grave where the seagulls cry.
I have to see where the sun rises,
Where on the Elbe river my beautiful Hamburg lies.

Greut mine Fru, vertellt her ick weur bleeven.
Küsst mi das lüttje, seute blonne Kind!
Tröst jem; een Wiedersehn dät geven
Wo tags de Sünn und nachts die Sterne sünd.

Greet my wife; tell her I stayed.
Kiss the little one for me, the sweet blond child!
Console them, saying that we'll see each other again,
Where the sun is and at night the stars.

Dann Kameraden, stellt jo nochmal op;
Die Mützen av, und in der Hand das Book,
Singt mi een Lied no'n blauen Heben rop
Op Plattdütsch, mine leeve Modersprook.

Then, comrades, muster up again,
Caps off and in your hands the book.
Sing me a song up to the blue sky,
In Low German, my dear mother tongue.

Tears rolled down your cheeks, my dear boy, more and more of them. Did you already sense your coming Norman fate?

And so you all grew older, healthy in body and soul, at home in Holstein with its sea. Ready for action, unshakable in your loyalty and love and comradery. Your years of growing up were gilded with much sunshine, happiness and love. You were the sons of a soldier and then soldiers yourselves, all of you, who fought for Germany on all fronts—in the air, on and under the sea, and on land. And you would have thought of all this and many more wonderful things when your last moments drew near.

In an ice-cold night, the ice floes were crashing against your ship as it began to sink. With intrepid courage and a solace-bringing smile for your men you went aft and used the hand rudder in the hope of steering the leaking ship. And then you made sure those around you had life jackets and you were the last one—and the only one without a life jacket—to jump into the black water. And your final thoughts, this I know for certain, were joyful memories, a happy smile of fulfillment played about your lips and your last sigh was, I feel it: "Father, Mother, Brothers!" And now you're marching into Valhalla, one of many and one among many who share your fate. There, up above, they all stand, the heroes, winking at you and forming a guard of honour. And thus they honour you in respectful silence. Marches are played and there is the sound of whirling drums. And on your head, the never-wilting laurel is placed, the wreath of eternal soldiers and of everlasting humanity.

Writing all of these thoughts down brought me relief and slowly eased the searing pain. Life, too, claimed its right to go on, and my

family needed a happy father. And so I slowly began to come to terms with what I was going through and it was only during certain lonely hours in the night that my loss chased sleep away.

In our spare hours and when I had my remaining three sons with me during their holidays, we liked to go the estate of our patron and friend Count Karl Khuen near Znojmo. The countess suffered from a severe heart condition, but her charm and kindness were exceptional and exemplary. She could have lived many more years; however, when she was fleeing the Russians on foot, she fell down dead of a heart attack and was buried in a village graveyard nearby. She certainly found eternal happiness, which she likely deserved more than others. But during the time I am speaking of she was still among us and took an interest in everything.

One Sunday afternoon, I received a telephone call in Vienna from the count, who asked me to come to him as soon as possible. At the time we were all together at home and were looking forward to a quiet afternoon, and so I tried to turn him down. But the count kept insisting that I come. And so I put on my uniform and drove off to have tea with him. When I entered the room, I could instantly feel the tense atmosphere. Next to the countess sat a stunningly beautiful young girl who looked at me, or rather pierced me with black eyes gleaming with anger.

The blood of my great grandfather stirred in my veins, and in my head I heard, once again, "Lovely girls were created for soldiers not for clerics." And so I summoned all the weapons I had available as a man and got ready to storm. This was precious prey! When I was being introduced to her, I could positively feel her iciness. And now the purpose of my visit was explained to me. The young lady had arrived here early from her neutral home country, wanting to visit acquaintances in Budapest. But, she said, it was terrible; it was known that we were going to attack her home country tomorrow, whereupon she would be sent to a camp where tears would salt her bread. First, I of course assured her that we would never attack a harmless neutral country. Then in came the consul general of the country, to whom my female enemy belonged and whom I also knew personally, and he excitedly repeated the accusation. I was actually correct in my denial; nothing happened at the time. It was only a quarter of a year later that the suspicion became a reality. But, because I could see that they did not believe me, there was nothing left to do but show my good will. Looking at the consul general sharply, I said the following: "You have just told me that the young lady belongs to the staff of your embassy in Berlin and is here for professional reasons. This makes her extraterritorial and so any danger of internment can most certainly be ruled out. It would be recommended that she return to the embassy in Berlin, so that she falls under the protection of her ambassador should the situation

become as serious as you believe—which I very much doubt. If you agree with the conclusions I have drawn, I will see to it right away that the young lady can travel tomorrow." The consul general and all those present were naturally enthusiastic about the escape route I had proposed. The consul general only replied that it would be impossible to arrange travel in such a short time.

With the satisfied sense that my demeanour had had a favourable effect, I swiftly said goodbye and drove to my office. Within a short time, I was able to secure a spot in an airplane that was flying to Berlin the following day. After everything was sorted out, I drove back to the count and was received with eager eyes. After all, this was about the wellbeing of the beautiful young lady, who had captivated all of the male parties and perhaps the female parties as well. With a practiced air of nonchalance, I reported that everything had been arranged, that the young lady could rise at her habitual hour and have breakfast without ruffle or excitement. At 10 am, a car would come to get her and take her to the airstrip. She would be at her embassy in Berlin in time to have lunch. I also said that it was important to me to show that we were not waging war against women, and besides, taking these measures was really quite superfluous.

There were audible sighs of relief and one could positively hear how a load was taken off people's minds. My female enemy's heart was lighter, too, and she was already beginning to warm up to me. She asked me if there would soon be peace. I replied, "I hope so from the bottom of my heart." "Where will the peace negotiations take place? Likely in London? And will you be taking part?" "Certainly. For it is almost certain that peace could hardly be achieved without my influence." Would I then be travelling through her country? I certainly would be. Was I familiar with her country? Yes, very familiar; I had been there for quite some time during the First World War. I also knew the beautiful government building belonging to her father and had stayed in the room on the second floor on the left. Well that was her room! And when I was in her country again I could sleep in her room again! At this, I ventured to the limits of the permissible. I stood up, bowed to my beautiful lady and responded to the trust she was placing in me. "Most gracious lady, this honours me to no end, but please remember that I am over sixty years old and I believe and fear that I would not survive it." Both she and the rest of the room erupted in hearty laughter over my dose of cheekiness and now I had won. From this first acquaintance grew a true friendship. In addition to the joy I felt at the personal level, this friendship also filled me with satisfaction insofar as it entailed an undoing of enemy propaganda which dearly wanted to cast us all as criminals. In any case, I came across as something of a white raven.

When she visited later, she played golf with our Franzl and stayed in our house. One time, things happened to arrange themselves in

such a way that she and I were both in Berlin at the same time. We had several hours to kill before her train left, which, on her request, we spent walking through the Brandenburg Gate to Tiergarten, with me the old general walking next to her, proud as a peacock, with my striking white lapels. Here, we could speak openly. The envious eyes of younger officers followed me, who considered it completely inappropriate that I with my white hair would be strolling alongside such a beautiful young lady. Yet, soon my interest in the world around me disappeared, and I concentrated on the important thing that my companion was telling me, allowing me to peer into the deepest crevices of her restless and roiling heart.

To put it succinctly, the situation was as follows: the king had asked for her hand in marriage and loved her very much.[207] She and especially her parents were very hesitant to go through with it as their background was middle-class. My narrator then told me she had grown up among eight siblings, and everything she told me and her manner of speaking were so noble and decent and deeply moral that I could only feel a deep respect for her. In the end she blushed and further admitted that she loved her suitor passionately in return, and that she was at the end of her rope after what was now months of going back and forth. And aside from her parents, there was no other older person in her life in whom she could confide and whom she could ask for advice. Now fate had pulled me into the orbit of her life, and from the trust she had invested in me she was now confessing to me and asking for counsel. After taking some time to consider—after all, this was no ordinary case—I gave the following answer, approximately: "You know, my dear child, that kings' thrones have always been very wobbly—and this is especially true in these times. So, suppose your king were to become a humble peasant and it was up to you to look after the chicken coop and the cow stalls, would you still want to become his wife?" Her eyes seemed to speak and to glow with pride and it was clear that she felt deeply moved. "Yes!" she said. Myself very touched, I replied that everything was as it should be and she would do well to accept the proposal.

And so this solemn and celebratory consultation came to an end, and we walked to her train quietly but happily, full of thoughts. It was high time, too. With great effort and urgency, I was just able to jump off the departing train in which I had secured her a seat. With an impish smile on her charming little face, she offered me her hand for a kiss. And now this adventure, too, had come to an end. A few days later, I received a charming letter in Vienna, full of thanks and

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[207] T.N. Considering that he calls her country a neutral country, which Belgium still was early in the war, the young woman might very well be the later Princess Lilian of Belgium, who married King Leopold III in 1941.

devotion. At the end came the words, "I actually wanted to give you a kiss when we parted, but then the train started moving. I'll make up for it next time." What good this did me! I copied this sentence and sent it to my sons, adding, "My dear sons! This is a voucher for the future that I plan to cash in myself. Don't any of you dare take over for me!"

A little while later, we met at the estate of our mutual friend, Count Khuen. When it was time for me to depart, I had car trouble. Quickly, she got her heavy American car from the garage and we sped along to my office. Two guards at the gate presented their arms, and faces were gaping from all the windows. They were all the more interested as they had recognized in an instant that the young girl the old general had come away with was squeaky clean. With a devilish laughter in her eyes, she stood close to me and offered to repay her debt. But now I had to turn her down because it would have given several jealous souls a stroke.

But I was to receive my kiss in the end. When I went back to Count Khuen's estate a few days later and we had finished our meal, she, all caution and decency, pressed a kiss on my cheek in the presence of the hosts. Now I had to be content with that. But still, if you consider the beginning of my story, this was a significant success.

And then came the day of the marriage. My head was abuzz with thoughts of what I could give them on their wedding day. What could I as a simple soldier give a royal couple? But then I went to a bookshop and purchased a particularly lovely hardcover edition of Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince* and wrote a few words. In their thank-you card, they said it was the best of all the wedding gifts and that they had read it on their first evenings together. At the end of the note, I read the words written in the king's hand, "Your happy prince." To my great delight I can say that I've seen how the two have become truly happy. They already have a magnificent boy and they live in a rare kind of harmony with each other. All's well that ends well: that is how I will end this short novel taken from real life.

In this time, we were overtaken by another round of terrible news. Our eldest son had not returned from a sortie over the sea. As parents, we positively collapsed under the weight of this new burden. In my distress, I reached out to an American chargé d'affaires in Berlin whom I knew well and asked him if he could obtain information. Three days later, I received a phone call at my office. When I picked up the receiver, the following words were said to me: "Telegram from Berlin via the American Embassy: Captain Gautier is well and comfortable. Wynant." That was the American ambassador in London, who later died by suicide. For this reason, my family and I were never able to express our thanks to him, but we think of him with sincere devotion.

When I, utterly dazed, replaced the receiver, the telephone rang again. The call was from Berlin, from a colonel of the air force, who repeated the news that my son had been rescued. Over the previous days, everyone had been carefully tiptoeing around me to show their consideration and awareness of my pain. Now they all came bounding up to me, the two secretaries, the advisor and finally my dear adjutant: "Dear General, close your files. Your car is ready. Go home, get your wife and spend some time somewhere nice. Don't let anything get in the way of your happiness on this day."

And so it was. It was early May. A magnificent day. We drove off and stopped in a lovely spot and picked bouquets of violets, which had just begun to bloom. We comported ourselves like newlyweds and passersby must have delighted in it. Oh how blissful we were to know that our boy, our dear Werner, was safe. In the truest sense of the word, he had been reborn for us. Henceforth, I thought, he really should go by the name René.[208] This was something that was on my mind the whole time back then. Subconsciously, I had begun to believe in the past weeks that our son had to have been rescued because God would not allow his life to be lost on the fourteenth of April, a hundred years after the day his grandfather, my father, had been born. One ought not scoff at such intuitions.

My wife and I ended up in Mayerling, where Crown Prince Rudolf had lost his life a lifetime ago. Deeply moved, we sank to our knees in the small chapel and thanked God for his mercy. It was here that another mother had once wrestled with fate, poor Empress Elisabeth,[209] whose entire happiness had fallen apart. Our thoughts also went to her, and my wife found the right words: "The Chapel of the Mater Dolorosa.[210]"

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[208] C.D. René means reborn.

[209] T.N. Elisabeth of Austria (1837-1898) was Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary. She never recovered after her only son Rudolf, Crown Prince of Austria, and his mistress Mary Vetsera died in a suicide pact at his hunting lodge at Mayerling in 1889.

[210] C.D. The Mater Dolorosa is a Latin term referring to the Virgin Mary as the "Sorrowful Mother".

Werner Gautier, the eldest son, in his navy flyer's uniform about 1940, soon before becoming a prisoner of war. Werner was captured after being shot down off the coast of Dover, England. After incarceration in England, he was shipped to POW camps in Canada, first in Farnham, Quebec, then Belleville, Ontario, then Kananaskis, Alberta.

Kurt-Theo Gautier, the second son, as a young naval officer. He died in February 1940, a few months after the beginning of World War Two, when his ship was torpedoed in the North Sea. He gave up his life jacket to a common sailor. The sailor survived; Kurt-Theophil drowned.

Georg Gautier, the third son, in his Kriegsmarine uniform. During World War Two Georg served as an officer on the German submarine U-617 under the command of the famous Albrecht Brandi. When the boat was scuttled in the Mediterranean Sea, he was captured and sent to Spain as a prisoner of war.

Franz Gautier, the fourth son, on leave during World War Two. Franz was killed in northern Italy in April 1945 by machine-gun fire, two weeks before the war ended in Europe.

Lieutenant General Theophil Gautier during World War Two, presumably in Vienna where he was Armaments Inspector. During all of this time his four sons were officers in the German military. Two of them, Kurt-Theophil and Franz, were killed in the war, and the other two, Werner and Georg, became prisoners of war.

Part Ten
Defeat and Looking to the Future

Chapter 28
A Further Heartbreak

Meanwhile, the war was wearing on and expanding its reach. Further unhappy nations were being drawn into the vortex and the youth of all of Europe were bleeding to death on the battlefields. All efforts to finally build a dam to stop the surges were failing. The hopeless chaos that had to be coming, especially to the defeated, was becoming increasingly obvious to us and our circle of friends. And the fact that we would have to lose, in spite of all heroism, was clear to us as well. And so my heart grew heavier and heavier.

Now we only had two sons, Georg and Franz, the two youngest, whom we could see from time to time. By now, Georg had become a watch officer on a submarine. I was able to participate in the commissioning of the submarine in Hamburg. It was a great pleasure to meet the commander, Lieutenant Albrecht Brandi,[211] who with his boat got himself the Iron Cross with diamonds. One can gather from this what kind of action the boat was engaged in and can only respect the capable commander all the more when one hears that despite the loss of this boat—his first one—he did not lose a single man. All of them returned home unharmed. His battlefield was the Mediterranean, which was particularly dangerous for submarines due to the shallow water, the submarine's natural enemy. Whenever a combat patrol against the enemy had been completed, a telegram would come in from our Georg, telling us about his upcoming arrival at Vienna South Station. In our bliss, Mo and I would drive to the train station, sometimes waiting for hours. Usually, well-groomed people would be disembarking from the train that came from Italy, having travelled there in some capacity, where, compared to our by now largely exhausted country of Germany, not only groceries could still be purchased but also clothing, bedding and footwear. And one time amid all of these people, there appeared from a first-class car a pirate, stepping down from the train. He was pale and thin, with stubble sprouting on his face, wearing blue garb, covered in a layer of oil and sporting clunky whale oil boots and a so-called cap that

[211] C.D. By the end of the war, Albrecht Brandi had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds, the highest award in the military and paramilitary forces of Germany during World War Two.

was covered in green and showed no evidence whatsoever of its former gold. This pirate, thanks be to God, was not carrying a weapon, so at least he did not pose a threat to fellow travellers. He was our son, the Lieutenant. The guards at the train station would have likely given him trouble had I not taken him under my protection.

There was a very simple explanation: the boat, having completed its sortie, did not put into port in Toulon, where it had put to sea, but instead went to Pola[212] to have some repairs done. And so the crew could not access their luggage when the boat put into harbour, and the men on leave had to depart wearing everything they'd had with them for weeks at sea. What great comfort our son then felt when he bathed and freshened up at home, and now he looked impeccable—*picobello*[213]—in his fine apparel. And then it was time for his stories. It was truly incredible to hear that, when travelling underwater, the noise of depth charges close by or far away could be heard ceaselessly and sounded like a soft chiming of bells. And also, how you got completely used to this. Georg soon came home with an Iron Cross, 1st Class, and he was recommended for the German Cross in Gold when the war came to an end.

The overhaul in Pola took quite a long time, so Mo boarded a train and went there, where Georg was to take over for a comrade who was going on leave. The two of them had a splendid time, enjoying *frutti di mare,* wine, fruit and a lot of olive oil. Mo's stomach was no longer used to such hearty food, and at first she suffered from severe nausea. Walking and riding bikes, the two of them got to see much of the beautiful surroundings, including the Brijuni islands, which are known to every golfer, with the resort founded by the Viennese doctor Herr Kupelwieser.

When Mo then sat in her train compartment after a sad farewell, Georg suddenly reappeared and sat down next to her; the train quickly departed and Mo was appalled because Georg would not be able to get out and would miss his boat. But then Georg set her straight. During their test sortie that morning, an Italian coastal battery had taken the boat under fire, and there had been some strikes, though thanks be to God only material damage had occurred. Now the boat had to be repaired once again, and so our son came to us on leave for another week.

But then came the terrible days when we had to give him up for dead. The Base Action Leader reported to me that there had been no radio connection with the boat for days and so one had to contend with the loss. What torture can be as terrible as when you fear for

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[212] T.N. Pula, Croatia, with its naval base.

[213] C.D. Picobello is a word derived from the German piekfein (posh), to mean spick and span or shipshape.

that which is most precious to you? As it turned out, the boat really had been destroyed, but the crew had been rescued and were interned in Spain. On November 10, 1943, the commander wrote to me about what had happened as follows:

We sank three destroyers at a distance of twelve nautical miles from Gibraltar. First one on a straight course and then, a little later, two at the same time with a fan shot. After this second attack, we naturally had to push off from Gibraltar because the defence was growing too strong. Then, on September 12 at 00:51, an undetected aerial attack was carried out in the bright moonlight fifteen nautical miles from the Spanish/Moroccan coast and approximately ten nautical miles west of Melilla. The airplane's lights were shot out very quickly but it was undeterred in dropping its bombs. Approximately 200 meters from the last bomb, it then plunged into the water, evidently having been critically struck after all. No one was able to get out. Luckily, the onboard weapon fire had spared all soldiers; however, one bomb dropped next to the boat as the plane approached, and with some delay detonated under the boat. In the boat, everyone had come down from deck and the boat was unable to dive for at least forty-eight hours. Once the boat had been ventilated (due to destroyed batteries, a significant amount of chloric gas had developed), we proceeded down the coast with one diesel engine, going in a serpentine line (without a compass). The next attack came a bit more than an hour later. The shells were failing to strike their targets but the onboard weapon fire was very good—yet, we were surprisingly lucky. No one was killed. Injuries were significant. Two hours later, against our immediate will but to our good fortune, we ran aground on a rock two meters underwater, sitting impossibly high and dry. The plane stayed close by but after the first attack did not approach again. The crew was sent ashore in life rafts with the most necessary things. Secret material was burned on land, and so the task of destroying the boat remained. Consideration was given to the fact that regular explosives only serve to sink a floating boat and hence were insufficient. Faced with this dilemma, your son Georg saved the day, suggesting that we detonate the spare torpedo in the aft bilge area, which would successfully destroy the boat. Though I had my misgivings about the feasibility of the plan at first, he remained tenacious, and was entirely in the right.

My hesitance came from the fact that, swimming, we would not be able to reach land during the nine-minute fuse time and that we would certainly not survive the detonation in the water. And so your son, as well as a non-commissioned officer and I stayed on board and stood starboard in the bow, our knees bent and were surprised when nothing whatsoever happened to us when, after nine minutes, the fish[214] blew up. The suggestion on which your son had so doggedly insisted had proven its legitimacy in every respect, because now the boat was destroyed. In general, I often took counsel from

[214] T.N. Navy slang for torpedo (in German "Aal," i.e. eel).

Gautier, for one thing because of his clear tactical eye, which was often more impartial than mine as commander, perhaps because I often had to think about too many things. And almost equally as often, I actually followed his advice and carried out one measure or another that he had suggested. For this reason, I recommended him as Lead Boat Commander and expected much of him. I am saddened that I may no longer dive with these magnificent people; they were all good men. Now I take over the boat of Lieutenant-Commander Röther, who has to step aside, and will go on in the Mediterranean. Our time in Morocco was very amusing for a month. Your son would be better able than I to describe how the comrades fared in Spain as I am no longer with them. Sending my gratitude for everything that you, Honoured General, have done for U617 and her men. Your humble Albrecht Brandi.

And with that, the war was over for Georg. He had completely fulfilled his duty and it had nothing to do with him that he couldn't participate at the front any longer. For us as parents, it was a great relief. We could now justifiably hope that we would not lose this son of ours. He was interned in Cádiz with his crew, where they had an interesting time. There could be no objection to the chivalric treatment they received from the Spanish. Georg found a true circle of friends there and enjoyed their sincere sympathies. A special advantage, one that will likely have a shaping influence on his life, is that he learned the Spanish language. Because of this, there appear to be certain opportunities available to him when he finishes his studies in engineering.

When I picked up the receiver of the ringing telephone on January 2, 1944, I heard the unexpected voice of Georg calling from Madrid. Even though our conversation was brief, we were able to hear his voice and learn that he was well. He would only come back to us two years later, and now he is studying at the technical college in Munich. Due to time-related troubles, we have to live far away from him in Eldagsen.[215] Only parents are able to understand what a sacrifice is being asked of us once again.

The war situation became increasingly threatening in 1944. Alongside the battles on all fronts, there was also war within. The *Wehrmacht* was fighting a desperate battle against the party, which held the book of "state rules" in its hand and used it relentlessly against any [parliamentary] obstruction.

However, amid all this darkness, there were also strange or even comical interludes. For example, one day we received a visit in Vienna from a very distant relative, a major of the air force reserves. As it turned out, he was a fine chap. After our meal, we were sitting on

[215] T.N. This comment remains somewhat cryptic. Why did they have to live in Eldagsen, in Northern Germany?

the veranda smoking and when we asked him how things had gone for him, he succinctly told us:

In the First World War, I was an active aviation officer. After the defeat, I travelled around the world because being home was insufferable to me. In the end, I wound up on the beautiful island of Mallorca, which I liked very much. With the help of a mason, I built a small house at the beach and led a marvellous life. I spent my time swimming, reading, sunbathing, working in the garden, fishing and sailing. Because some people find that I'm a good painter, I also painted. When my money ran out, I would bundle up my works, travel to Paris and sell them.

From the proceeds, I would amuse myself in Paris for a few days and when I'd had enough I'd go back to Mallorca to my Tusculum[216] *and continue to lead the life of Riley there. I had an American as a neighbour. He was every bit as much of an epicure as I was and we got on famously. We would drink our whisky together and smoke our pipes by the fireplace, chatting away to our hearts' endless content. This was all wonderful until the Local Group Leader came.*[217]

The Local Group Leader was a German confectioner from Palma. He had a bad file on me and proceeded to positively foul up my life. It was unbearable, so I was happy when the present war began. I travelled to Berlin to the Ministry of Aviation, offered my services and was accepted. Now in my advanced years I have been flying as a spotter and as such have been part of the whole North African campaign. What will happen next only the gods know."

This was the attitude the decent German intelligence had toward the party. If only the party had not been, from the top down, so unfathomably stupid. In the end everything can be forgiven, just not stupidity, as is well known. Just how bigoted the great masses were was illustrated to me in a very disagreeable encounter I had in a streetcar. A forestry official who knew me started speaking to me in a loud voice from several seats away; he said the behaviour of the generals was outrageous. Never in German history had generals mutinied against the state leaders, and today they had even carried out an assassination attempt on the Führer! All eyes were upon me. I had been retired from service for many months when the assassination attempt was carried out. And had I let myself be led to reply harshly, I would have had to contend with insults. Today, generals are accused of not doing anything to fight the Führer; this after many dear generals were killed by Hitler in connection with the events of July 20. How incapable of discernment the wide masses are, and how vacillating their judgement. Depending on what serves

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[216] T.N. An ancient town south-east of Rome, best known for its many luxurious patrician country villas.

[217] T.N. The *Ortsgruppenleiter (Local Group Leader),* a Nazi Party political rank held by the chief Nazi in a municipal area.

them well at the time, the masses have their cries of *hosanna*[218] or *crucifige*[219] ready at hand. As Horace says, "*Odi profanum vogus et arceo*!"[220] Talleyrand coined the phrase "*La guerre est une chose trop sérieuse pour être laissée aux militaires*."[221] If the *Wehrmacht* had been united with a reasonable foreign office and had been left with the decisions, and if the ominous influence of the party had been kept at bay, the war never would have erupted.

The longer the war went on, the more it also led to certain perversities, which often couldn't help but have an element of comedy. When one of my nieces wanted to marry, it was impossible to find a wedding dress. Close to her house one night, an enemy aviator came down with a parachute and was caught. Quickly, the resourceful bride-to-be took hold of the parachute and subsequently had her wedding dress sewn from the silk.

Sadly, our dear house, which held so many memories of our four boys' childhood, was a victim of the attacks. Every apple tree and every room and every corner had its story. I still remember my panicked terror once when I was thoroughly enjoying the relaxed contentment of a summer's day and suddenly heard crashing and breaking in the branches behind me, followed by a dull thump. Georg had been feasting on the cherries in the cherry tree when a branch broke and he came tumbling down. I can still see his body falling down just a few millimetres away from the pointy iron spikes of the fence, almost grazing them. If a good fairy had not protected him, he would have been impaled by one of them and that would have been the torturous end of his life. By the time the terrible scream escaped from my throat ("Georg!"), it was already over. He stood up, somewhat perplexed and dazed and then laughed with embarrassment as I wrapped him in my arms and kissed him, my love swelling— which was something I otherwise never did.

This dear house of ours, which, had it not been destroyed, would now be a home to us, saving us from the terrible vagabond life we've been leading in the last three years. Like all the neighbouring houses, it was destroyed. Late in August of 1944, an air-mine blew it away. A tragedy is connected with this strike. The house was being rented to a pastor and his family. His wife, the four children and a house maid were living happily there, just as we had in this house populated by good spirits and surrounded by beautiful natural scenery. In a split second, all of these people were extinguished,

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[218] T.N. A cry of praise in Christianity.

[219] T.N. Meaning "crucify him!"

[220] T.N. "I hate the common masses and keep them away."

[221] T.N. Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord was a French clergyman and leading diplomat. This quote could be translated as "War is too serious to be left to soldiers."

including a baby that had been born only two hours earlier. These poor souls could not even be given a grave as they were all blown away. "Gone with the wind." When we heard the terrible news, I could only string together a few words, trying to grasp the situation with Mo, "The poor man is at the front as a Pastor of the Division. Can you imagine what he must have gone through when he heard the news that everyone and everything he loved was now gone? I would not have survived that." Filled with the horror of it all at the time, I avoided finding out what became of the man.

Fate now took its inexorable course. Everyone around us who were from the German Reich fled Vienna. Because I had a good conscience, we decided to stay. By this I don't mean to say that the others didn't have a good conscience as well, but they were in any case too worried to sleep at night. The thunder of cannons was drawing increasingly near, and one morning the first Russian soldiers appeared in our street. Machine gun fire from German units on the other side of the railroad tracks carved deep wounds in the plaster of our house. Our loyal maid Käthe watched everything with interest from the bathroom window that looked out on the street. When it suddenly creaked in a gust of wind, a Russian shot at the window with his submachine gun, which blew up glass and stucco and mortar in her face. Chalk-white, she flew down the stairs into the cellar like greased lightning. That was her first lesson in the science of war.

Weeks of anxiety followed. The neighbourhood united in the most steadfast willingness to help. Night after night, people heard others sounding the alarm or gave an alarm themselves when attacks happened. Women were particularly vulnerable to attack. For weeks, Käthe slept in the attic in a well-positioned hideout. During the day, there was a constant flow of the various women who were using a system of galleries and walkways that had been created for this purpose. It allowed them to leave any place that was under threat undetected. This was not enough to prevent all of us men and women from being rounded up one day. A young female university student was separated from us with force and taken to the next room, where she was abused and beaten to death. Locked in the adjacent room, we were unable to intervene and save her. When we men were finally able to open the door, the culprits were long gone and the poor child lay before us in a pool of blood.

After a while, no one was being fed any longer. As Reich Germans, we would have been especially poorly treated had not our Käthe looked after us faithfully! I went on my first walk with her when I had to give up my hunting weapons and ammunition. It still pains my heart today, thinking about the sorrow that pervaded my soul at the time. But one became completely fatalistic in that situation. The police were Communists, and the heights of dehumanization to which they rose can be seen in the following lines:

Statement

On May 22, 1945, I discovered a poster of a printed "Police Order" of the police station of the Vienna District 3 at the address Vienna III, 8 Schredtgasse (Neulinggasse). This order carried the signature of District Head Fischer who belongs to the Communist Party, as well as of a person signing as Police Chief, whose name I no longer recall. It contained the following point: "Deceased horses and Reich Germans are to be buried with Reich German soldiers without ceremony or the participation of the population. Bomb craters may be used." I have reproduced the order verbatim. Vienna, IX/66, March 13th, 1946, Dietrichsteingasse 10/1, signed Hans Töpfer.

Immediately after the capture of Vienna,[222] I was taken by car to the Brünnlbad,[223] where I was shown to the GPU.[224] I was questioned for hours. Just when I was beginning to think that things were going very badly for me, I was unexpectedly helped by the female interpreter. It had been my intention to make her task as easy as possible and to, out of dire necessity, make "little eyes at her," as Goethe put it. And so it became obvious how she put a favourable spin on my statements, when she could have easily had the opposite influence. In the end, I pointed out to the interrogating officer that the Russian and the German armies were the only ones that wore tall boots, and thus there was a common military tradition there. This argument fell on listening ears and in the evening I was politely carted back to my poor Mo, who had gone to rack and ruin, having likely lost all hope of ever seeing me again. As a token of my gratitude for the correct and proper treatment I had been given, I gave a silver cup to the Russian officer who accompanied me back as well as one to the driver. The car then drove on to pick up my friend, the engineer Derfler, who was taken into custody for two days and nights in the Brünnlbad. His transport from his house to the Brünnlbad was delayed because the car with which I had been taken home and with which the officer intended to pick him up was used (stolen) by other Russians in the short time during which the officer and his driver were in Derfler's house.

All bicycles were expropriated. On every sidewalk one encountered Russian soldiers, who would be riding around on bicycles blissfully, like we did as children. Then one day, along came a boy who was riding his bike with no hands. One of the Russians took this as an opportunity to seize the boy's marvellous bicycle, which seemed to work without the use of hands for steering, and handed

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[222] C.D. Soviet forces captured Vienna on April 13, 1945 after an offensive begun on March 16.

[223] T.N. An old municipal bath.

[224] T.N. Theophil seems to be using the old name for the Russian secret police, which had changed in 1934.

him his brand-new bike as he did so. The clever boy saw the advantageous position he was in, quickly got on the new bicycle and took off. The Russian, who had to kiss his dream of riding with no hands good-bye was left standing and became the laughing stock of all of Vienna.

Thinking of this rough time, another funny story occurs to me, which an Austrian friend told me:

At the end of the First World War, there were intense disputes in the Austrian parliament about the abolition of nobility titles. The champion of the cause was a Czech member of parliament called Kramass.[225] One day, an Austrian member of parliament who was known for his biting wit and who came from one of the oldest noble families in Austria stood up and said, "'Count' is an essential part of my name, just as 'Kram' is an essential part of yours. What would you say, Herr Kram-ass, if you suddenly had to be addressed by only the second part of your wonderful name?" With this wisecrack, the Count had won over the room and thus had won the battle, for now.

To stick with the subject of laughter, I should like to share the following little memory:

It was the end of my military career and I was ordered to go to Paris to learn about the economic situation. At this occasion, I mentioned to the director of a paint factory whom I knew personally that I had visited Troyes. He said that he had very good customers from the textile industry there. "You see," he said, "we're starting to dye our bedding all sorts of colours. You Germans have only white linens, following in the footsteps of your forefathers. But you have to imagine: a beautiful young woman with light-brown skin will have a significantly stronger effect if she's in a bed dyed a shade of green, for example. So now a gentleman has the opportunity to wrap his current lady friend in bedding that goes with her skin colour, thus bringing out her charms even more." To be honest, I was so lost in this environment, I felt like Melchior Sternfels von Fuchshaim in his time, dear Simplicius Simplicissimus,[226] who came to Paris without a clue.

The occupation of Vienna wore on for months. We billeted two officers from the Russian occupation troops, along with the bride of one of them. It wasn't nice, but then again, occupation and billeting likely never are. On the day the other allied troops moved in, there was nothing but pure joy all around. We even received visits from several English ladies and gentlemen, and we continued to have lively contact with all our Austrian friends and neighbours. It is

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[225] T.N. Actually Kramarsch.

[226] T.N. This refers to Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch, a picaresque novel written in 1668 by Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen.

difficult to imagine more solid ties; sticking together proved its worth throughout all trials and tribulations. Even more so than before, I felt a connection to this beautiful country and its kind people. I had been granted unlimited residency, but at night I was beleaguered by thoughts of what I would do in the future. What would my sons think if I were to stay here and take on Austrian citizenship? What would old friends and comrades say?

I was preoccupied by these vacillating thoughts when the secretary of Minister Kienböck[227] unexpectedly called. She passed on his regards and told me he would like me to stop by. A few days later, I did so. Very graciously, he voiced his suggestion that I become involved in the clearing agreements between Austria and the Reich,[228] and that I take Austrian citizenship to this end. It was a very tempting offer. It would give me a fixed income, a respected position and a roof over my head into the future. I asked for forty-eight hours to think it over, after which time I answered him with the words of a Duke of Rohan: "*On ne quitte pas la France quand elle est malheureuse*."[229] With this answer, the die had been cast. We had to leave Austria. This hurt bitterly as Vienna had our hearts—and still does.

My next step was to go to the American consul general, who received me amiably and gave me a kind letter of recommendation since I had helped his predecessor. The letter invited the goodwill of whomever it concerned, and I took it to the first mover I could find, with whom I then went to the American transport officer because our furnishings were to go to Munich, which is to say to the American Occupation Zone. Thanks to the recommendation letter, the necessary cargo space was approved and two days later, late in March of 1946, our apartment was empty. All that was left in the dear rooms to which so many precious memories were attached were a few old garden chairs and an old table. In the midst of our melancholy thoughts, a postman came along carrying a letter from Belgium, sender unknown. Not expecting anything bad, I opened it and found the following:

> *Eupen, 73 rue d'Aix la Chapelle, Belgique, Prov. Liège, sender Joseph Lennertz.*
>
> *Dear Gautier family! Because I must assume that you have not had any news about your son Franz, I, having just come out of*

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[227] C.D. Viktor Kienböck served two separate terms as Minister of Finance in Austria's First Republic, and was also Governor of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank from 1932 to 1938.

[228] C.D. "Clearing agreements" were a way of settling trade debts between Austria and Germany without the traditional currency exchanges during a time of great economic instability and a shortage of gold and currency.

[229] T.N. "One doesn't leave France when she has fallen on hard times."

confinement as a prisoner of war, would like to fulfil this duty and tell you something about the time I spent with Franz in the last six months of the war. Franz and I got to know each other better and better. Neither of us was used to service in the infantry, and so we tried to help make it easy for each other. It was always a pleasure for me when I could visit with him for half an hour and exchange thoughts and impressions. When the allied offensive began in April of 1945, we were still together and could meet up quite often. Franz was always in good cheer and hoped that you were not affected by the battle for Vienna. When we spoke once about the future, he said almost wistfully that our lives would certainly be built next to rubble and that the rubble heaps would likely never disappear for good. On April 20 (1945) I was with him in the morning; Franz smiled happily and contentedly, with a youthful mischievousness. It was the last time that I saw him like this. Sadly, I must send you this sorrowful message. You have already lost one son near Narwik; now God has demanded a second sacrifice. On April 20, 1945, around noon, Franz was struck by a machine gun salvo on the right side of his forehead and down to his shoulder and sank down without making a sound.

Two minutes earlier, he had been smiling; two minutes later he, without suffering at all, went to a better life in the hereafter. The war had made us rough and hard, but now I became weak. My comrades had to pull him, my friend, out of the hole, so that we could lay him to rest near Budrio (Po Valley). It hurt me. Many people came to me to express their sympathy because they knew what he meant to me. Perhaps this is rare. Many fell before and after him but never did I feel the same commiseration. Allow me to express my sincere condolences and I hope that this letter frees you from a terrible uncertainty, thus giving you some consolation. I understand your pain because a few months ago I was informed of my father's soldier's death.

I was not allowed to take the wallet and valuables with me. Because the capitulation came seven days later, I assume that they could not be sent to you. Please write to his girlfriend in northern Germany, whom he adored so much. Unfortunately, I don't have her address. And please write back to me soon so that I can stop searching and so that I can write to you in more detail. Sending my heartfelt greetings once again, Joseph Lennertz.

And later, on June 1, 1946:

Yes, he fell during gun fire in a ground battle. A burst of fire hit him in the right side of his forehead and shoulder. It was at a dam between Budrio and Medicina. I was fifty metres away from him. His valuables had to be turned in at the command post. Many fell there, but it was during disengagement and—here I have to cause you suffering—there wasn't enough time to make a proper hero's grave.

Franz had his confident smile right up to his death. He spoke with joy about his youth, the golf he played, his travels and about driving cars with you, Herr Gautier. At the front, he had to do

without all of that; he was too pure for this world and will welcome his loved ones in a different and better world.

The last letter we received from Franzl reads as follows:

March 4, 1945
Dear parents!
Due to the nature of my duties and the recent change, I have not been able to write to you in the past few days. At the moment, I'm on night duty quite a bit and can only sleep during the day. In and of itself, it's quite interesting to get to know this side of things; the only problem is that I don't get to enjoy the lovely sun when I'm lying in bed during the day. I am, as always, well in every respect and remain, with best regards, your Franz.

These were the last words we heard from our so dearly beloved boy. Mo and I stared at each other as if we had been struck with a cudgel. We had been utterly convinced that he had been taken prisoner, and so this blow shocked us and hit us all the harder. The horror gaped at us from out of the empty rooms. Not so long ago, the happy voices of our children had resounded in these rooms; there had only been life and joy. And now two were dead and gone forever. And the other two were in Canada and Spain. Our contact with them had broken down entirely. How worried they would be for us. How would they bear the news of their youngest brother's soldier's death, the brother they jokingly called "Liebling,"[230] as Mo used to call him as the baby of the family.

It was a blessing that the kind Mautner-Markhof family made their hospitable home available to us for the time until we left. This way, Mo and I were at least in the company of other people and not by ourselves. We look back with profound gratitude at how warmly and compassionately we were received by them. It seems this kind providence was a balance to our willingness to help a poor refugee family from Bukovina, whom we had housed a few months earlier when a flood of refugees had inundated Vienna from the east. One evening the pastor of our tightly organized community had entered our room. Behind him was a woman and several children. "In the name of Christ, please take in these poor refugees. The woman is running a high fever, the children are starving and exhausted and on the brink of death," he said. It goes without saying that we agreed. The woman and the children recovered and then, through our efforts, found further care and support. The smallest child, Ernst, who was dark-haired, had almost yellow skin and whom we called "Peterle," became so dear to us that he almost felt like one of our own. As we have heard recently, the family is reunited now as the father who was believed dead has joined them.

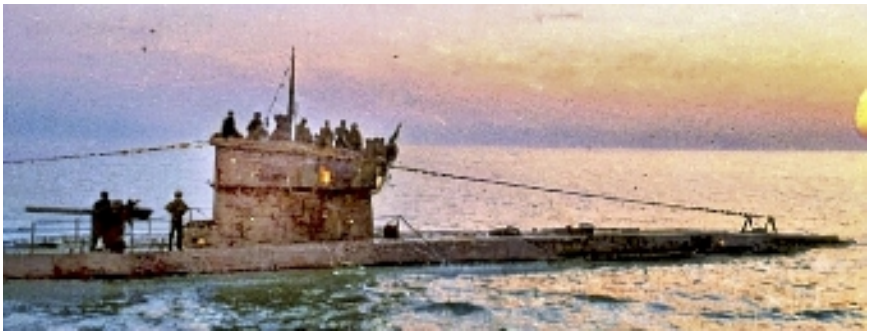
[230] T.N. "Darling".

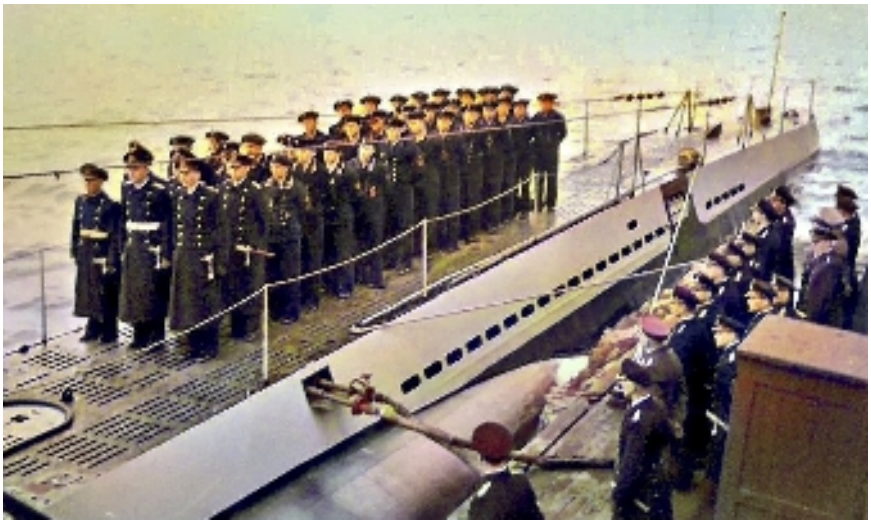
The day to bid farewell to our eight years in Vienna arrived. We shook hands with all of our neighbours and especially with our loyal day maid Käthe. There were tears in her eyes and ours. We cast a final glance at the garden and the house. And then everything disappeared around the corner.

Theophil in Luftwaffe uniform with his third son, Georg in Kriegsmarine uniform, during World War Two.

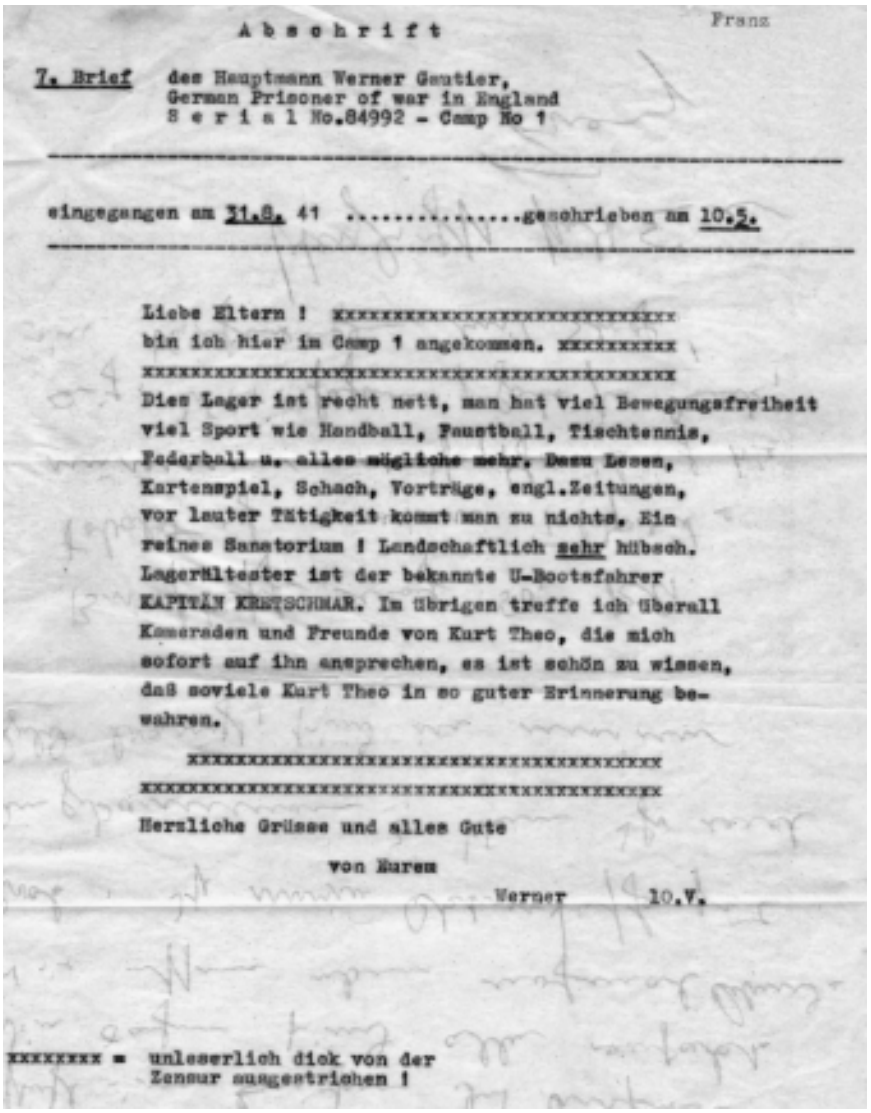
Theophil in his general's overcoat with his fourth son, Franz, during World War Two.

Albrecht Brandi, son of a German industrialist, was commander of U-617, the submarine on which Georg served as a Kriegsmarine officer. Brandi was recipient of Nazi Germany's highest military honors for destroying numerous enemy warships and merchant ships. Rather than allowing his submarine to be captured in the Mediterranean Sea, Brandi's crew, including Georg Gautier, scuttled it. Georg and the crew subsequently became prisoners of war in Spain; Brandi escaped to Germany. Source of photograph: Wikipedia.





Two photos from Georg's collection, presumed to be of submarines on which he served under the command of Lieutenant Albrecht Brandi. The bottom photo appears to have been taken at the commissioning of a brand new boat.



Abschrift

Franz

7. Brief des Hauptmann Werner Gautier,
German Prisoner of war in England
S e r i a l No.84992 - Camp No 1

eingegangen am 21.8. 41 .....geschrieben am 10.5.

Liebe Eltern ! xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
bin ich hier im Camp 1 angekommen. xxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Dies Lager ist recht nett, man hat viel Bewegungsfreiheit
viel Sport wie Handball, Faustball, Tischtennis,
Federball u. alles mögliche mehr. Dazu Lesen,
Kartenspiel, Schach, Vorträge, engl.Zeitungen,
vor lauter Tätigkeit kommt man zu nichts. Ein
reines Sanatorium ! Landschaftlich sehr hübsch.
Lagerältester ist der bekannte U-Bootsfahrer
KAPITÄN KRETSCHMAR. Im übrigen treffe ich überall
Kameraden und Freunde von Kurt Theo, die mich
sofort auf ihn ansprechen, es ist schön zu wissen,
daß soviele Kurt Theo in so guter Erinnerung be-
wahren.
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Herzliche Grüsse und alles Gute
von Euren
Werner 10.V.

xxxxxxxx = unleserlich dick von der
Zensur ausgestrichen !

Letter written by Werner Gautier to his parents from POW camp in England, before his removal as a prisoner of war to Canada. Translation in English follows on opposite page.

A True Copy

Letter from Hauptman Werner Gautier
German Prisoner of War in England
Serial number 84992 - Camp 1

Registered on 31.8.41
Written on 10.5

I have arrived here in Camp 1. This camp is quite nice. You have a lot of freedom of movement here. Lots of sports like handball, fist ball, ping pong, badminton and all sorts of other activities. There's also reading, card games, chess and lectures. With all this activity you cannot get anything else done. It is a pure spa (sanatorium). The landscape is beautiful. Our senior is the well-known submarine commander, Captain Kretschmar.

I am also meeting comrades and friends of Kurt-Theo who immediately speak to me about him, it is nice to know that so many hold good memories of him.

Warm greetings and best wishes from your Werner.

[The xxxxxxxx are sections that have been censored.]

Chapter 29
End of the War and a Final Message

We found ourselves an adequate spot in our enclosed freight car, whose walls and ceiling, however, had plentiful holes and gaps. The car was an old war veteran and had sustained its honourable wounds someplace or another. But for us the holes meant drafts and cold. The trip to Munich would take thirty-six hours and would prove to be incredibly strenuous. In the night, three children lay beside me, rolled up just as I was in the form of a snoozing dachshund. On the other side of me was their mother, who was getting close to delivering her next child and was not able to look after her children. And so I took her place and covered the children up when they had kicked off their blankets, gave them something to eat and drink and helped them with any other needs. It takes experiencing a refugee train like this, with all its wants and desperation and hopelessness, to grow humble and to remember the goodness of God, when people have lost sight of this altogether. The things the victors did and the things they neglected doing recall bad historical examples, and as I listened to the rolling of the wheels, these words echoed incessantly in my ears: "*Ceterum censeo, Germaniam esse delendam*!"[231] When they were said for the first time in the Roman senate, at the time when Carthage was destroyed, Christ did not yet exist. Today we hear of him in every church, in the press, on the radio and even in the cinema. But when God examines our thinking and our behavior, He must grow desperate and it seems to me that He will have to swing his scourge once more, so that we will finally fall to our knees and put into action that which we so often merely speak: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

In Munich, Mo and I secretly jumped out of the train when it stopped at the East Station for several minutes. Our suitcases were passed to us by the helpful hands of fellow sufferers. Right next to us, a train lumbered past, headed in the opposite direction. We had to positively suck in our bellies to avoid getting squished. American guards were on patrol everywhere. In the middle of the night, in the icy driving snow, we, sneaking along like Indians and straining under the weight of our luggage, got across the wide tracks that had

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[231] C.D. *Latin meaning "Furthermore, I think that Germany must be destroyed", which is a reference to Cato the Elder's persistent statement in the Roman senate before the Third Punic War: "Furthermore, I think that Carthage must be destroyed".*

been willfully bombed, and arrived at the train station. These things are all small odysseys.

In the morning I found a truck that could drive Mo and me out to Lake Starnberg, to the lovely property of an acquaintance who had written me in Vienna, demanding that I come to him. It was a well-kept house that seemed to have escaped the storms of time unscathed. Our host was a heavy, powerful man with a monocle in his eye and leather gaiters to match. He led us to a small library room where we made ourselves at home as best as we could. The man focused all of his activity on politics, which had noticeably polluted his head. He received me with the words, "You are coming at just the right time; I'm in the middle of a conversation with the American commander-in-chief. Signed by the American President Truman, I have a letter assigning an American officer to me as my adjutant, and he will live here in my house. Next week I will be picked up by a special car and taken to Frankfurt, where an in-depth discussion will take place between me and the commander-in-chief. This will result in me being named President of the Reich, after which time the German ministries are to be formed right away. So, indeed, you are arriving at just the right time. You will be my state secretary and now you have all the organizational arrangements to work out. By the way, I have peace for Germany all buttoned up. We will do without Alsace-Lorraine, but Austria will be annexed into the German Reich for good."

I had been without any connection to the Reich for over a year. The postal service had been blocked. And so I found myself completely disoriented with respect to the situation in my homeland. The enormity of what I had just heard left me stunned. Placing my hand on his arm, I asked him, "Is all of this true?" "Yes, certainly." Deeply moved, I said to him, "That is a tremendous and unimaginable success. Germany will never be able to thank you enough."

As I have said, these were flights of fancy, and after a few short weeks they turned out to be nothing but a dream. But it was not without comedy when it came to light that his claim to be a great sculptor proved to be false. He had had a large studio built for himself in which a number of statues were installed. A well-known painter wrote about this to a very dear female friend of ours: he, the painter, had lived for many years with our host in Paris, who had never created a sculpture but instead a Parisian sculptor had made them for him. He called the host a scoundrel, a judgement that may or may not be correct. In any case, he wasn't quite right in the head

any longer, and so one can see it as a mercy of fate that he suddenly took his leave from the world one day. It was like the anecdote about Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. When he was told by a beaming adjutant, "Majesty, Antwerp has fallen," he is said to have replied: "Well, I really am spared nothing!" I could certainly say the same thing with regard to my host!

We kept moving and eventually found four nice rooms in which to ensconce ourselves in beautiful Tutzing on Lake Starnberg. In these months, my soul was riled up due to the verdicts and their execution in the Nuremberg trials. Something inside me broke, namely my belief in humanity. For posterity, I must copy down the final words of General Jodl,[232] which he wrote down before his final, difficult passage:

> *It is my unshakable belief that history will come to have an objective and just judgement of the high military leaders and their helpers. After all, they and with them the entire German Wehrmacht stood before an impossible task, namely to wage a war that they did not want, under a commander whose trust they did not enjoy and whom they themselves did not fully trust, with methods that often contradicted their tried and tested principles of leadership and their traditional views, using troops and police forces of which they did not have full command and with an intelligence service that at times worked for the enemy—and all of this with the clear knowledge that the war would determine the existence or non-existence of the beloved fatherland. As far as I am concerned, I believe that no man can do better than strive for the highest of the goals that lie within his reach, and nothing other than this has served as the guiding principal of my actions since the very beginning. And for this reason, I shall, regardless of the verdict you come to, my dear judges, leave this courtroom with my head held as high as it was when I came in. Whoever calls me a traitor to the honourable tradition of the German Wehrmacht, and whoever claims that I remained at my post for personal, egotistical reasons, that is the person whom I call a traitor to the truth.*
>
> *In a war such as this, in which blanket bombing obliterated hundreds of thousands of women and children and in which the partisans used absolutely any means they deemed suitable, tough measures are no crime in the eyes of morals and conscience, even if they may seem questionable under international law. I believe and confess: one's duty to the people and the fatherland stands higher than any other duty. To fulfill it was my honour and highest law. I'm proud of it. May this duty, in a happier future, be replaced by an even higher duty: a duty to humanity.*

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[232] *T.N. This is presumably General Alfred Josef Ferdinand Jodl. He served as the Chief of the Operations Staff of the German Armed Forces High Command throughout World War Two.*

Since then, opinions have continued to clash about this. An end to the terrible destabilization is not even in sight. Where does the truth lie? Humanists are still talking about Socrates's cup of poison, but what has already been forgotten is the inner strife that poor, heavily burdened fellow human beings go through before they find eternal peace through an act of violence. And yet—think of their actions as one might—they, too, are martyrs of their convictions.

From Tutzing, we continued on to Eldagsen, where again we found conditions that were hardly enjoyable. Yet, there was a faint silver lining: perhaps we would be able to find a place to stay in Frankfurt, where we would be with Werner and his wife and our darling grandchild Christa Madeleine, our first,[233] as well as with Georg, who would have to begin studying in Darmstadt instead of Munich and could live with us. A small house is in the process of being built. Perhaps I'll also find a use for myself there so that the pointlessness of my current existence may come to an end. And it would be a triumph for me to give my loyal partner in life, our Mo, a purpose in life again, namely looking after the children and grandchildren in her own house,[234] within the bounds of a comfortable domesticity that would be hard fought for. There could be Christmas parties for the children and grandchildren, complete with all the magic that we so purposefully tried to create in earlier, happier times. Here I recall a Christmas when all four of them were still at home. In the little village church, Kurt-Theo sat with devout eyes, singing all the dear German Christmas songs with his bright, clear voice. And so, I heard him sing in blissful belief: "O you joyful / O you blessed / Boy-bringing Christmas time!"[235] How long might he have puzzled trying to explain this line to himself!

All this is so long ago now! In the meantime, I had found three little friends: Bernhard, his sister Gerlinde and their friend Ilse. These three had become very fond of me, and on many long winter nights, we played Horserace or Quartets. When the summer came, I

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[233] C.D. This is where I make my appearance in the text.

[234] C.D. Theophil's portrayal of his wife differs greatly from my remembrance of her, and the memories of my cousins. He was the one who delighted in the company of children and treated them with warmth and kindness, whereas she did not express much affection or maternal feeling towards her grandchildren.

[235] T.N. His misheard lyrics were: "O, Du fröhliche, O du selige, Knaben bringende Weihnachtszeit," hearing "Knaben" (boys) instead of "Gnaden" (grace).

invited all three to take swimming lessons. The two girls soon became dependable swimmers; the boy didn't. Because nothing else was available, I gave them money at Christmas, along with a short fairy tale that I came up with.

Finding myself now at the end, looking back once more on the colourful and eventful life that God has granted me, I am filled only with a deep feeling of gratitude towards Him. He has let me experience highs and lows and has allowed joy and sorrow alike to accompany me. The wish for peace on earth is still far from being fulfilled. The Christmas story as told in the Gospels falls on deaf ears.

And so, we descendants of an ancient family that always demanded confessional loyalty as its highest commandment must tighten our helmet straps in unshakable adherence to our conviction. Terrible gaps have been torn in our family, but we survivors, in our hot love for our fallen, rally all the more closely around our Huguenot banner, which we fly in today's tempest, raising our ancient call of faith:

Résistez!

Theophil Gautier out of uniform, in a contemplative mood.

A new beginning after the war: Werner Gautier, Theophil Gautier's eldest son and father of Christa Gautier Dunn. After release from POW camp in Canada at the end of World War Two, Werner returned to Germany, married his sweetheart, Rosmarie Bachmann,and they returned to Canada with their toddler, Christa, and infant son, Ulrich, to start a new life there. Afterwards, Werner scarcely ever talked with anyone about the war or his family's long, rich and ultimately tragic history in Germany.

Epilogue

The Second World War is over. As with the first, we have lost. A foreseeable outcome. Having anticipated this, I arranged with my sons that we would use the Hollenburg at the foot of the Karawank Mountains[236] as a communications base when the four of them left for the war. We imagined the destabilization would be so great that we would be scattered throughout the world and it would take a great effort to find our way back to each other. Unfortunately, this prediction was accurate.

The outcome of the war is terrible, although it is always this way: In the end one side loses and has to see how it will get back up on its feet. If the wounds of the defeated have been received with honour, then generally the victor will extend his hand and help the defeated. But that is the horrendous thing this time. The infamy of some of the leading men of the Third Reich has dragged through the mud the flag of our *Wehrmacht*, whose ranks almost all of our people had joined and which achieved tremendous military deeds. Violence, desecration and insidious murder were carried out by individual groups, commanded by perverse criminals who with cunning and trickery had got hold of the leadership of the country and undermined the respect of our brave *Wehrmacht* and our poor, unfortunately all too diligent and obedient people, soiling our name.

Yes, these people had brought things to the point where, for many Germans, the fatherland was lost for years. I too lost it and became a conspirator of 20 July 1944 in order to get it back. Life had been nothing more than the fear of the terror within and of the collapse which we saw coming inexorably with the blows dealt by the much superior opponents. The regime of the small-minded and uneducated people who imagined governing to be simple and falsely supposed that demagogy would be sufficient for it, collapsed. They were not even able to resist the temptations that came with the limitless power in their hands. Enrichment, insane luxury and intrigues were their sad features. They themselves betrayed certain aspects of their dogma that were perhaps worth something and made rubbish of it. These "leaders," many of whom were the sons of modest families, forgot all about the old saying from the trades, "Let the cobbler stick to his last," and brought unimagined catastrophe upon the world.

With our collapse, however, tensions have not come to an end, unfortunately. They persist with greater intensity and no one can say how the world will truly find peace. Help can only come in the form

[236] C.D. A range of the Alps at the convergence of Austria, Italy and Slovenia.

of all of us learning to feel like Europeans and to finally manage to act that way. In any case, we are standing before the ruins of our Reich, and seldom in the history of all peoples has a Reich been in such shambles. Indeed, we are left with searching the shards to try and piece our fatherland back together.

It is up to each and every one of us to try and win back the trust of mankind though leadership and good morale. It is an almost impossible task for people who have never been as broken as we are. Lethargy has come to the point where no one wants to work anymore. The enormous desperation which fills the vast majority of our people—who have become decimated, pulled apart, driven from house and home, who are hungry, sick, dying on the side of the roads, penned up and homeless—forms the soil in which grows nihilism.

The shockwaves of these events brought a two-month-old child to us, whose father was lost fleeing his home, and whose mother came to us by chance with three other children with high fever.

But perhaps there is something good in all of this. We have nearly reached the lowest low. Any lower and there would only be the abyss and complete downfall. So if one does not believe in this, as I do not, one may predict with certainty that every achievement, every instance of gathering one's courage, signifies a step upwards.

This is the state we are now living in. It is necessary to mention this, as it will help understand some of my views and the way some things are depicted. In front of me are your photographs, dear sons. You are looking at me, encouraging me to write down in the forced leisure to which I must now submit myself what would otherwise irrevocably fall prey to the past.

There's your large and colourful photo, Werner, a gift of Mrs. von Quistorp. Already, you are smiling a little bit sarcastically, like your grandfather Lieder. As the oldest, you are already aware of the insanity of the times.

Of you, our dear Kurt Theo, the photos are all that remain. All the more unshakably stands the monument to you, dear boy, in our hearts. Every morning and every evening I conjure up your image, and your happy smile gives me a sense of calm in the moment.

You, Georg, are putting your hand on the neck of a camel that carried you on your rides along the North African coast after you were shipwrecked there and swam ashore.

And you, Franzel, our youngest, sit before me in your comfortable fast-train seat, on a short holiday from work to go to the golf tournament in Feldafing. How happy you look. May you always be that way!

Like others, our family was dealt a mighty blow by fate. Our Kurt Theo has been lying in the North Sea for years now. The circle of his hope-filled life closed when he was just 20 years old. All of us miss his great love, which shone on us like warming rays of sunlight. And

the other three of you, where are you? In Canada, Spain and Italy, where the winds of this war blew you. Are you still alive? Do you need help? Will we ever hear from you again? See you again? We, the parents, are ourselves without income, without work, and at every moment prepared to have to leave our house and our last possessions. In what is now a foreign country we, as foreigners, are not looked upon favourably. In short, our fate is completely uncertain.[237]

Finis

[237] C.D. It is heart wrenching to read that at the time of writing Theophil believed that his youngest son Franz had survived the war. Unbeknownst to the parents, Franz had died just two weeks before the cessation of hostilities in Budrio, Italy. His parents weren't informed of his death until almost a year later, during which time they thought he was being held as a prisoner of war.

Afterword and Acknowledgements

by Christa Yvonne Madeleine Gautier Dunn

The last two chapters are truly heartbreaking. What horrors they survived; They lived their lives backwards, going from comfort and ease to repeated losses of both family and fortunes. In the final chapters, murder, rape, refugee trains and all of those horrors become common place. It's almost impossible for us to imagine. My grandfather has left me with a remarkable first hand account of what it was like for individuals living in that time.

As for Nuremberg, I think that Theophil makes two things clear. One, the Allies were not entirely saintly in their behaviour, which does not in any way excuse Germany but should be kept in mind as well. Secondly, his abhorrence of the Nazi regime is also clear, which leaves us with the question that repeats itself throughout history—how do individuals extricate themselves from the jaws of the circumstances in which they find themselves? What other options might he have had? Or General Jodl, hanged at Nuremberg, for that matter? Both of them struggled with their conscience throughout this period. Could they have acted differently? It's hard to see how they could have.

About this book. Yes, it has been a very long journey for me. My translators, Kenney-Unglaub, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, are outstanding. I owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Like my publisher they have a deep understanding of the historical context which has enabled them to add informative footnotes. Because I did not give the translators a deadline, they did the work in bits and pieces as they had time available. Because of this I did not have to pay the full going rate; given the enormous bulk of the book, this was a blessing.

My editor , Helen Claire Reeves, Toronto, Canada, was the one who broke up the massive volume into reasonable sections and chapters. That was what I needed her to do. We deleted bits and pieces—but not much. I continue to struggle with the issue of the bulk of this book. But I cannot find any way to reduce the size without decimating the story.

No one else, save my publisher, helped me with this except when I found Susan Sambrook, Montreal, Canada, to help me scan the photos into files for my publisher. I had been asking around for some time to find a person like her; it was pure serendipity that I found her and she happened to be available. We managed to sort through and caption everything in a few days time. Big job but fun to do with her. She's not only lovely but competent.

As for my two sons' interest in the family history—at present it is absolutely nil. Am I disappointed by this? Not really. If I recall, when I was their age I wasn't interested either. My driving ambition has

been solely to leave them with a legacy that they can understand and possibly appreciate when they are older. I feel I owe this to my father and my grandparents who went to great lengths to leave me with a full accounting of our family history, which is long and rich. Now that this book is complete, I have done my duty. If my sons are grateful for this that will be a bonus but it is not what drives me.

I will however start to nag them loudly about the family portraits which both of them currently disdain. I will be clear in my will, and in everything I will be saying to them, that the portraits are precious family heirlooms and not ever to be given away. I truly will come back to haunt them should they not uphold this directive from me.

Now, to my publisher, George Trask. His name is behind his company, Coastal Villages Press. An articulate and learned lawyer and a student of history and culture, especially of Germany during the first half of the 20th century, George brought his personal experience of the late 1950s and early 1960s as a traveler throughout central Europe and as a student at the University of Vienna to this project. George has done everything himself to make this book a tangible reality, from reading, understanding and typesetting all 134,154 words of text and footnotes—equivalent to the length of two novels—and turning the scores of photos into beautiful living color with captions that he wrote and that he put with painstaking and sensitive effort at the right places on the pages. I remain and will always be hugely and profoundly and sincerely grateful for George's support, his insights and his incredible ability to pull all of this together for me. I have loved working on these projects with George.

And for the record, these three books are just as much George's legacy as mine. I would not have been able to do these books without George's colossal support and effort. George must take as much credit for these books as I.

Theophil Gautier's Military Career

Generalleutnant Theophil Gautier
Born: 16 Feb 1881 in Oels, in Silesia (Schlesien)
Died: 06 Sep 1953 in Frankfurt, Main
Promotions:
Fahnrich zur See (10 Apr 1900); Leutnant zur See (27 Sep 1902); Oberleutnant zur See (11 Jun 1904); Kapitänleutnant (27 Mar 1909); Korvettenkapitän (13 Jan 1917); Oberstleutnant (01 Nov 1934); Oberst (01 Apr 1937); Generalmajor (01 Jun 1938); Generalleutnant (01 Apr 1941)

Career:
Entered the Navy and Attended Training at the Naval-School (10 Apr 1899-16 May 1899)
Seekadett on Board the School-Ship *Stosch* (19 May 1899-03 Apr 1900)
Officer-Training at the Naval-School (04 Apr 1900-08 Apr 1901)
Torpedo-Course on the Torpedo-School-Ship *Blücher* (14 Apr 1901-05 Jun 1901)
Infantry-Training with the I. Sea-Battalion (06 Jun 1901-06 Jul 1901)
Platoon-Leader-Course on Board the School-Ship *Mars* (07 Jul 1901-30 Sep 1901)
Granted Leave (01 Oct 1901-28 Oct 1901)
Departed to East Asia (29 Oct 1901-16 Dec 1901)
Officer-Candidate on Board the Heavy Cruiser *Hansa* (17 Dec 1901-27 Sep 1902)
Court and Watch Officer and Adjutant on the Heavy Cruiser *Hansa* (28 Sep 1902-30 Sep 1903)
Returned Home from East Asia (01 Oct 1903-27 Oct 1903)
Adjutant on the Torpedo-School-Ship *Blucher* (28 Oct 1903-04 Apr 1904)
Training on Board the Torpedo-Boat *S 86* (05 Apr 1904-15 May 1904)
Watch-Officer on the Torpedo-School-Ship *Blücher* (15 May 1904-30 Sep 1904)
Adjutant on the Torpedo-School-Ship *Blücher* (01 Oct 1904-02 Jan 1905)
Course with the II. Torpedo-Officer-Course (03 Jan 1905-31 Mar 1905)
Officer-Candidate-Instructor on Board the Torpedo-School-Ship *Blücher* (01 Apr 1905-30 Sep 1905)
Torpedo Officer on the Liner *Kaiser Friedrich III* (01 Oct 1905-30 Sep 1907)
Inspections-Officer and Instructor at the Naval-School (01 Oct 1907-31 Mar 1909)
Sea-Cadet-Officer on the School-Ship *Charlotte* (01 Apr 1908-31 Mar 1909)
Sea-Cadet-Officer on the School-Ship *Hansa* (01 Apr 1909-21 May 1910)
Placed to the Disposal of the Naval-School (22 May 1910-22 Aug 1910)
Leader of the 2nd Company of the I. Sailor-Division (23/08/1910-18/09/1910)
Company Officer with the I. Torpedo-Division (19 Sep 1910-15 Oct 1910)
Torpedo-Officer-Course (17 Oct 1910-29 Oct 1910)
Company-Officer with the I. Torpedo Division (30 Oct 1910-30 Sep 1913)
At the same time, also Commandant of the Torpedo-Boats *G 134*, *G 137* and *G 154* with the V. Torpedo-Boats-Half-Flotilla (04 Jan 1911-13 Sep 1913)
Leader of the 5th Company of the I. Torpedo-Division (01 Oct 1913-14 Mar 1914)
At the same time, Commandant in the V. Reserve-Torpedo-Boat-Half-Flotilla (01 Oct 1913-31 Oct 1913)

At the same time, Chief of the V. Torpedo-Boat-Half-Flotilla (01 Nov 1913-23 Dec 1913)
At the same time, Course for Half-Flotilla-Chiefs (17 Feb 1914-20 Feb 1914)
Chief of the V. Torpedo-Boat-Half-Flotilla (15 Mar 1914-29 Jan 1918)
Chief of the III. Torpedo-Boat-Flotilla (30 Jan 1918-22 Apr 1918)Commandant of the Torpedo-Boat *V 116* (23 Apr 1918-30 Nov 1918)
Representative of the Commander of the Naval-Forces of the North-Seas, Kiel (01 Dec 1918-15 Feb 1919)
Chief of the II. East Sea-Minesweeper-Flotilla (16 Feb 1919-22 Nov 1919)
Retired (22 Nov 1919)
Entered the Luftwaffe as a Supplemental-Officer (fully activated on 01 Oct 1937)
Adjutant with Air-District-Command VI (Sea), Kiel (02 Jul 1934-24 Feb 1936)
Detached to the RLM, LC III (25 Feb 1936-31 Mar 1936)
Department-Leader with the Armaments-Inspection Dresden (01 Apr 1936-31 Mar 1938)
Armaments-Inspector XVII, Vienna (01 Apr 1938-30 Apr 1944)
Retired (30 Apr 1944)

Descendancy of Gautier Family

1-GAUTIER, Guillaume Francois Louis b. 26 May 1712, Berlin, d. 3 May 1757
+LAURENS, Suzanne
└─ 2-GAUTIER, Louis b. 6 Mar 1737, Berlin, d. 14 Sept 1797, Breslau, Silesia
  +CLAUDE, Marie Magdalena
  └─ 3-GAUTIER, Franz Christoph b. 18 Nov 1774, d. 28 Dec 1833
    +HOFFMANN, Christiane Sophie Wilhelmine
    └─ 4-GAUTIER, Franz Christian Ludwig August b. 17 Jan 1801, Breslau, d. 21 Jan 1847
      +GUTKE, Mathilde Luise b. 16 Dec 1808, d. 16 Aug 1878
      └─ 5-GAUTIER, Etienne George Louis b. 14 Apr 1839, Rewicz, d. 31 Mar 1892, Bunzlau
        +STEPHANY, Johanna Lucie b. 18 Jun 1855, Goch am Rheinland, , d. 19 Sep 1888, Aalau, Bunzlau, Silesia, Germany
        └─ 6-GAUTIER, Louis Etienne Theophil b. 16 Feb 1881, Oels, Silesia, Germany, d. 8 Sep 1953, Frankfurt, West Germany
          +LIEDER, Elsbeth Etha Helene ("Mo") b. 14 Mar 1894, Shanghai, China, d. 29 Jul 1978, Frankfurt, West Germany
          ├─ 7-GAUTIER, Werner Etienne Philipp b. 15 Jul 1914, Kiel, Germany, d. 30 Sep 1989, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
            +BACHMANN, Rosmarie Barbara Emma Elizabeth b. 29 Jan 1923, Germany, d. 23 Feb 2005, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
            ├─ 8-GAUTIER, Christa Yvonne Madeleine b. 12 Apr 1948, Sandhorst, Ostfriesland, Germany
              +DUNN, Stuart Gwyllym
              ├─ 9-DUNN, Whitney Stuart b. 23 Sep 1976
                +HYNDMAN, Bryn
                ├─ 10-DUNN, Damian Peter b. 16 Oct 2012
                └─ 10-DUNN, Theo Gwyllym b. 16 Oct 2012
              └─ 9-DUNN, Brendan Holt b. 23 Jul 1979
                +BLAKELY, Catherine
                ├─ 10-DUNN, Emery Blakely b. 28 Jan 2014
                ├─ 10-DUNN, William Holt b. 16 Oct 2015
                └─ 10-DUNN, Duke Brendan
            └─ 8-GAUTIER, Ulrich Theophil Etienne b. 17 Nov 1949, Sandhorst, Germany
              +ROBERGE, Paule
              ├─ 9-GAUTIER, Philippe Etienne b. 27 Nov 1980
              ├─ 9-GAUTIER, Mathieu Ulrich b. 20 Nov 1982
              ├─ 9-GAUTIER, Monica Michelle Christa b. 28 Aug 1984
              ├─ 9-GAUTIER, Dominique Helene Rosmarie b. 9 Feb 1988
              └─ 9-GAUTIER, Brigitte b. 17 Feb 1990
          ├─ 7-GAUTIER, Kurt-Theophil b. 26 Mar 1919, Germany, d. 22 Feb 1940, Germany
          ├─ 7-GAUTIER, Georg Ludwig b. 1 Jun 1921, Germany, d. 15 Apr 2006, Germany
            +KAHNY, Rosemarie
            ├─ 8-GAUTIER, Franz Theophil Rene b. 14 May 1956
              +WEINBERGER, Gabriele Maria

9-GAUTIER, Benjamin Tobias Fedus b. 19 Jun 1982
+FRANZMAN, Delia
10-GAUTIER, Maximilian Atrio
9-GAUTIER, Sebastian Kurt Georg b. 18 Apr 1984
+NIABOATENG, Dorothee
10-GAUTIER, Aliyah Julie
8-GAUTIER, Susanne Friederike Saida b. 10 Aug 1958
+VIEHMANN, Dirk
9-VIEHMANN, Alina b. 15 Feb 1989
9-GAUTIER, Jana Maria b. 18 May 1998
8-GAUTIER, Lucie Sabine b. 2 Mar 1960
+CASPARI, Joachim Josef b. 18 Aub 1955
9-CASPARI, Oliver Dominik b. 18 Jan 1990
9-CASPARI, Patrick Lars b. 16 Jan 1993
7-GAUTIER, Franz b. 28 Jul 1923, Germany, d. 20 Apr 1945, Germany

Descendancy of Stephany Family

1-STEPHANY, Carl Gottlieb b. 17 Mar 1723, Stargard, Pomerania, Prussia, d. 1 Jun 1795, Stargard, Pomerania, Prussia
+SCHRODER, Regina Elizabeth
└ 2-STEPHANY, Johann Gottlieb b. 3 May 1754, Stargard, Pomerania, Prussia
+VON BURGSDORFF, Friederike Henriette Ernestine
└ 3-STEPHANY, Johann Heinrich Gottlieb b. 2 Oct 1795, Stettin, Pomerania, Prussia, d. 1871, Halle an der Saale, Saxony, Germany
+VOSS, Christine Maria Frederike
└ 4-STEPHANY, Johann Friedrich Ernst b. 23 Sep 1823, Berlin, Brandenburg, Prussia, d. 1887, Halle an der Saale, Saxony, Prussia
+BREUN, Katherine Wilhelmine Amalia Auguste b. 19 Jul 1823, Erfurt, Saxony, Prussia, d. 2 May 1898, Saarbrucken, Rhenish Prussia
— 5-STEPHANY, Johanna Lucie b. 16 Jun 1855, Goch am Rheinland, , d. 19 Sep 1888, Aslau, Bunzlau, Silesia, Germany
+GAUTIER, Etienne George Louis b. 14 Apr 1839, Rewicz, d. 31 Mar 1892, Bunzlau
└ 6-GAUTIER, Louis Etienne Theophil b. 16 Feb 1881, Oels, Silesia, Germany, d. 8 Sep 1953, Frankfurt, West Germany
+LIEDER, Elsbeth Etha Helene ("Mo") b. 14 Mar 1894, Shanghai, China, d. 29 Jul 1978, Frankfurt, West Germany
— 7-GAUTIER, Werner Etienne Philipp b. 15 Jul 1914, Kiel, Germany, d. 30 Sep 1969, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
+BACHMANN, Rosmarie Barbara Emma Elizabeth b. 29 Jan 1923, Germany, d. 23 Feb 2005, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
— 8-GAUTIER, Christa Yvonne Madeleine b. 12 Apr 1948, Sandhorst, Ostfriesland, Germany
+DUNN, Stuart Gwyllym
— 9-DUNN, Whitney Stuart b. 23 Sep 1976
+HYNDMAN, Bryn
— 10-DUNN, Damian Peter b. 16 Oct 2012
— 10-DUNN, Theo Gwyllym b. 16 Oct 2012
└ 9-DUNN, Brendan Holt b. 23 Jul 1979
+BLAKELY, Catherine
— 10-DUNN, Emery Blakely b. 28 Jan 2014
— 10-DUNN, William Holt b. 16 Oct 2015
└ 10-DUNN, Duke Brendan
└ 8-GAUTIER, Ulrich Theophil Etienne b. 17 Nov 1949, Sandhorst, Germany
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— 9-GAUTIER, Philippe Etienne b. 27 Nov 1980
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— 9-GAUTIER, Dominique Helene Rosmarie b. 9 Feb 1988
└ 9-GAUTIER, Brigitte b. 17 Feb 1990
— 7-GAUTIER, Kurt-Theophil b. 26 Mar 1919, Germany, d. 22 Feb 1940, Germany
— 7-GAUTIER, Georg Ludwig b. 1 Jun 1921, Germany, d. 15 Apr 2006, Germany

+KAHNY, Rosemarie
8-GAUTIER, Franz Theophil Rene b. 14 May 1956
+WEINBERGER, Gabriele Maria
9-GAUTIER, Benjamin Tobias Fedus b. 19 Jun 1982
+FRANZMAN, Delia
10-GAUTIER, Maximilian Atrio
9-GAUTIER, Sebastian Kurt Georg b. 18 Apr 1984
+NIABOATENG, Dorothee
10-GAUTIER, Aliyah Julie
8-GAUTIER, Susanne Friederike Saida b. 10 Aug 1958
+VIEHMANN, Dirk
9-VIEHMANN, Alina b. 15 Feb 1989
9-GAUTIER, Jana Maria b. 18 May 1998
8-GAUTIER, Lucie Sabine b. 2 Mar 1960
+CASPARI, Joachim Josef b. 18 Aub 1955
9-CASPARI, Oliver Dominik b. 18 Jan 1990
9-CASPARI, Patrick Lars b. 16 Jan 1993
7-GAUTIER, Franz b. 28 Jul 1923, Germany, d. 20 Apr 1945, Germany
5-STEPHANY, Alfred
+REUSCH, Ida
5-STEPHANY, Elise
+GISECKE, Otto b. 10 Jun 1847
6-GISECKE, Wolfhard
6-GISECKE, Hans
6-GISECKE, Susa
6-GISECKE, Helmut
6-GISECKE, Otto Wilhelm

Colophon

Coastal Villages Press is dedicated to helping to preserve the timeless values of traditional places—building houses, families and friendships to endure through the centuries; living in harmony with the natural environment; honoring history, culture, family and friends—and helping to make these values relevant today.

In collaboration with Christa Gautier Dunn at my still young age of 85 years, I, George Graham Trask, imagined, designed, laid out and produced this book, and converted its photographic images from monochrome into lifelike color. It is available printed and bound as a hardback book and, at my urging, preserved and rendered digitally at data centers around the world.

Publishing books is one of my hobbies. I completed the production of this book on October 31, 2025—the eve of All Saints Day—at my summer retreat at Stonington, Maine, a traditional fishing village on Deer Isle along the coast of the North Atlantic Ocean. It was set by me in Constantia, a transitional serif typeface reminiscent of Eric Gill's Perpetua.

This is my 45th book, the third I have done for Christa about her German ancestors, the most challenging, and the most fulfilling. Thank you, Christa.